

JULY 1912

PRICE 15 CENTS

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE



Shirley
L.
Edna
Mary
James
Frederic
James Oliver
John
Walter
Ellis

All Classes Profit Through Oliver Typewriter Local Agencies

ONE of the most amazing things about the Oliver Sales Organization is the fact that it dovetails into so many branches of business, practically all the professions and innumerable occupations. The most valued asset of many a business is its Oliver Typewriter Exclusive Agency Franchise. There are lawyers and doctors whose Oliver Agency pays their office and all other professional expense. Salaried men sell Oliver Typewriters in spare time and make *more than their salaries*. More than fifteen thousand Local Agents are now in the field for

The **OLIVER** Typewriter *The Standard Visible Writer*

There is room for as many more. But we pick new men cautiously, carefully. Each successful applicant gets the *Exclusive Agency* for new Oliver Typewriters in his territory during the life of the contract. Note the diverse occupations, trades and professions represented by these Local Agents:

Automobile Salesman Sells 80 Olivers

Johnstown, N. Y.—I have handled the Oliver as a side line, using only spare time for demonstrating and selling, and have placed in the neighborhood of 80 machines.

The unrivaled machine and the unequalled sales organization of the Oliver Typewriter Company makes your Local Agency Proposition one that affords any energetic person an excellent opportunity to enlarge his bank account by simply using his spare moments to good advantage.

CHAS. A. MILLER,
Johnstown Motor Car Co.

Village Jeweler Sells Oliver Typewriters

Brighton, Ontario.—During the past seventeen months I have sold nine Oliver Typewriters in this village. Selling typewriters is very pleasant and profitable employment and can be carried on without interfering with other business interests.

WM. M. KETCHUM,
Jeweler and Optician.

Real Estate Dealer Sells Olivers in Spare Time

Alma, Kan.—I have been your agent here for several years. More Oliver Typewriters sold here than all other machines combined.

J. B. FIELDS,
Real Estate and Loans.

Banker Profits by Oliver Local Agency

Story City, Iowa.—It has been a pleasure to me to act as agent. I think the only new machines sold in this town since 1906 have been Olivers, and the best part of the whole proposition is that every customer is satisfied.

H. T. HENRYSON,
President First National Bank.

Lumber Dealer Sells Oliver Typewriters

Culbertson, Neb.—I have been representing The Oliver Typewriter in my territory for about three years. The Oliver local agency plan is a grand success.

J. H. BRANTLEY, Manager,
The Barnett Lumber Company.

A Postmaster's Success

Itasca, Texas.—Your Company offers greater possibilities to its local agents than any other vocation in life to the young man. Energy, push, honesty and integrity are recognized, and any young man so equipped will force to the front with the Oliver organization. J. S. RICHARDS,
Postmaster.

Stationery Firm Values Oliver Agency

Springfield, Vermont.—The Oliver Agency is surely worth having, not only as a direct means of increasing one's profits, but also from the prestige that results from the combined relationship. We believe it will pay any firm or person to take on and sell Oliver Typewriters.

W. H. WHEELER & SON,
Stationery and Office Supplies.

Public Stenographer Wins as Agent

Lamar, Mo.—For the past ten years I have been local representative for The Oliver Typewriter and wish to express my appreciation of the efficient services rendered at all times by your force.

Lamar is an Oliver town, there being at least three times as many Olivers in use here as all other makes of machines combined.

ORA VAN PELT,
Stenographer and Notary Public.

Investment Company Makes Agency Pay

Norman, Okla.—We have placed over one hundred machines in Norman. The results are pretty good evidence of what we have done.

STATE INVESTMENT CO.,
By C. M. GREISMER, President.

Newspaper Editor Proud of Oliver Agency

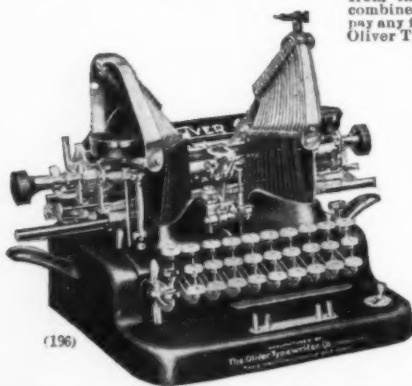
Long Prairie, Minn.—Although our village is small the steady income from my Oliver business has been very pleasing. I have taken as much pride in pushing the Oliver as I have in pushing the Leader, which I own and edit.

RUDOLPH LEE, Editor the Leader.

Insurance Man Sells Oliver Typewriters

Skowhegan, Maine.—There are more Olivers here than of any other one manufacture. It is fun to sell them.

CHARLES FOLSOM-JONES,
Insurance and Investments.



How to Apply for a Local Agency

Just tell us who you are and why you want the agency. We do not demand exclusive services or require previous selling experience, but the men we choose must measure up to a high character standard. Address

Agency Department

The Oliver Typewriter Company

392 Oliver Typewriter Building, Chicago

JUN 21 1912

THE RED BOOK

MAGAZINE

CONTENTS FOR JULY, 1912

Copyright, 1912, by The Red Book Corporation. Entered at Stationers' Hall, London, England. All Rights Reserved.

COVER DESIGN	Painted by Henry Hutt	
PHOTOGRAPHIC ART STUDIES	By White, New York	
FRONTISPIECE	Drawn by Edmund Frederick	
To accompany "The Ripple Case"—page 493		
THE BLACK HORSEMEN OF MIR JEHAL	James Francis Dwyer	417
A MYSTERY OF THE SOUTH SEAS	<i>Illustrated by William Oberhardt</i>	
BEULAH OF THE SUN	James Oliver Curwood	430
A WOMAN REPORTER WINS A "STORY"	<i>Illustrated by Lawrence Herndon</i>	
THE LADY WITH THE RELUCTANT LOVER	Ellis Parker Butler	438
THE ADVENTURE OF THE PINK CUPID	<i>Illustrated by Rea Irvin</i>	
THE BLACK BAG	L. J. Beeston	447
A MERCHANT AND HIS REVENGE	<i>Illustrated by Robert Edwards</i>	
THE FRESH-FROM-THE-SOIL-PRODUCT	Earl Hennessy	456
THE STORY OF AN ARTIST AND HIS MODEL	<i>Illustrated by Henry Hutt</i>	
TOMASO AND THE WHALE	Mary Imlay Taylor	467
A STORY OF ITALIAN CHILDREN	<i>Illustrated by B. Cory Kilvert</i>	
CUPID AND A GRAVEYARD	Frances A. Ludwig	474
ISABEL'S LOVE STORY	<i>Illustrated by Robert A. Graef</i>	
THE PIRACY OF BLACK SCOTTY	Frederick R. Bechdolt	482
A LIGHTHOUSE TOM RESCUE EXPEDITION	<i>Illustrated by W. H. D. Koerner</i>	
THE RIPPLE CASE	Ernest L. Starr	493
A DIVORCE PLEA THAT HAD TO BE DISMISSED	<i>Illustrated by Edmund Frederick</i>	
THE WEAK SPOT	Edwin Balmer	505
A GIRL SEES IT AND WINS THE DAY	<i>Illustrated by J. Henry Bracker</i>	
GRANDMOTHER	Ethel Train	515
A STORY OF WONDERFUL SWEETNESS	<i>Illustrated by Hanson Booth</i>	
A MAN OF HIS WORD	Ralph W. Gilman	526
LOVE MAKES HIM BREAK A VOW	<i>Illustrated by Douglas Due</i>	
THE HOUSE OF THREE ROADS	John A. Moroso	536
BONEHEAD TIERNEY, INC., EMPLOYS A SWELL GUY	<i>Illustrated by W. J. Scott</i>	
BLUE POINTS AND BAKED BEANS	Gertrude Brooke Hamilton	548
A WAITER PLAYS CUPID		
A THREE HORSE ELOPEMENT	Barton Wood Currie	553
A CURE FOR ROMANTICISM	<i>Illustrated by Horace Taylor</i>	
THE DRAMA OF THE SUMMER TIME	Louis V. DeFoe	561
REVIEW OF THE NEW YORK PRODUCTIONS	<i>Illustrated from photographs</i>	

TERMS: \$1.50 a year in advance; 15 cents a number. Foreign postage \$1.00 additional. Canadian postage 50c. Subscriptions are received by all newsdealers and booksellers, or may be sent direct to the Publishers. Remittances must be made by Postoffice or Express Money Order, by Registered Letter, or by Postage Stamps of 2-cent denomination, and not by check or draft, because of exchange charges against the latter.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: Do not subscribe to THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE through agents unknown to you personally, or you may find yourself defrauded. Many complaints are received from people who have paid cash to some swindler, in which event, of course, the subscription never reaches this office.

THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE is issued on the twenty-third of the month preceding its date, and is for sale by all newsdealers after that time. In the event of failure to obtain copies at news-stands, or on railway trains, a notification to the Publishers will be appreciated.

Advertising forms close three weeks prior to the time of issue. Advertising rates on application.

THE RED BOOK CORPORATION, Publishers, North American Building, CHICAGO

LOUIS ECKSTEIN, President

CHARLES M. RICHTER, Business Manager

RALPH K. STRASSMAN, Advertising Manager, 1172 Fifth Avenue Building, New York

R. M. PURVES, New England Representative, 201 Devonshire St., Boston LONDON OFFICES, 5 Henrietta St., Covent Garden, London, W. C.
Entered as second-class matter April 25, 1905, at the postoffice at Chicago, Illinois, under the Act of Congress of March 3, 1879.



This Beautiful Book of the Orient

Sent Postpaid Upon Request

ILLUSTRATING the quaint and artistic articles collected by Vantine's in the Mystical Lands Beyond the Sea—exquisite tea sets of egg-shell delicacy, dainty fans of beauteous design, ivory wrought by fairy hands, kimonos of cobweb fineness and rainbow hues, Mandarin coats that hint of the alabaster shoulders of an Oriental princess, baskets for the blossoms of midsummer, jewelry that recalls the days of barbaric splendor, and numerous other examples of Eastern craftsmanship, for presentation purposes, or personal use.

We shall be pleased to send a copy to you promptly upon request

Vantine's Famous Japanese Kimonos

From the very birthplace of these dainty creations come the selections which comprise the Vantine stocks and include kimonos of soft silks and crepy materials, deftly woven 'mid the romantic environment of far-away Japan, embroidered or stenciled in artistic designs that only the Oriental artist can create.

In ordering please state bust measure.

No. 500R Beautiful Japanese Habutai silk kimono embroidered in cherry blossom or wistaria design, in all colors. Price including sash, prepaid, **\$10.00.**

No. 1003R Japanese crepe kimono printed in stork, dragon, or floral designs, made on the same model as our silk kimonos. Price including sash, prepaid, **\$3.50.**

No. 985R Japanese Habutai silk kimono in delicate shades of blue, pink, lavender, and old rose, exquisitely embroidered in cherry blossom design. Price including sash, prepaid, **\$18.00.**

No. 943R Japanese Habutai silk kimono, artistically embroidered in chrysanthemum design in light blue, pink, old rose, navy, black, and old blue. Price including sash, prepaid, **\$15.00.**



No. 500R, \$10

No. 1003R, \$3.50

No. 985R, \$18

No. 943R, \$15

VISITORS TO NEW YORK

Are cordially invited to this veritable mecca of objects of art and utility from all parts of the Old World. Rivaling in interest many of the greatest show places in the metropolis.

Our store at 18th St. and Broadway is easily accessible from all hotels and depots.

A·A·VANTINE·&·CO·

BOSTON

NEW YORK

PHILA.





MISS VIVIAN MARTIN
in "Officer 666"

Photograph by White, New York



MRS. LESLIE CARTER
in "Two Women"
Photograph by White, New York



MISS WILLETTE KERSHAW
in "Snobs"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS MONTIE BROOKE HARRIS
in Vaudeville
Photograph by White, New York



MISS MARJORIE BOWEN

Photograph by White, New York



MLLE. JULIETTE DIKA
in "The Rose Maid"
Photograph by White, New York



MISS ENID LESLIE
in "Dear Old Charlie"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS RUTH MAYCLIFFE
in "Officer 666"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS MAUDE LEROY
Photograph by White, New York



MRS. J. J. VANDERGRIFT

Photograph by White, New York



MISS PERLE BARTI
in "Baron Trenck"

Photograph by White, New York



MLLE. BRONISŁOWA POJITZKAIA
at the Winter Garden

Photograph by White, New York



MISS TRIXIE WHITFORD
in "The Winsome Widow"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS BESSIE HOLBROOK
in "The Follies of 1910"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS BARBARA WITHROP
in "The Winsome Widow"
Photograph by White, New York



MISS ESTELLE FRANCESCO
in "The Winsome Widow"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS ELEANOR ST. CLAIR
in "The Winsome Widow"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS FRANKIE JAMES
in "The Wall Street Girl"
Photograph by White, New York



MISS MABEL CARRUTHERS
in "Mein Liebschen"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS RUBY LEWIS

Photograph by White, New York



MISS MARY SERVOSS
Photograph by White, New York



MISS CAROLYN PARSON
in "A Certain Party"
Photograph by White, New York



MISS FLORENCE FISHER
in "The Typhoon"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS KATHRYNE KEMMER

Photograph by White, New York



MISS ALICE LINDAHL
in "The Trail of the Lonesome Pine"
Photograph by White, New York



MISS HELEN HOWARD
in "A Certain Party"

Photograph by White, New York



MISS IRENE WALLACE
Photograph by White, New York



MISS REGINA VICARINO
Photograph by White, New York

The scene between The
Wife and The Judge in
Ernest L. Starr's

"THE
RIPPLE
CASE"

see page 493

"It is too good an opportunity to pass up. In politics there is no better weapon than derision."
"Except possibly letters written to a woman," said Polly thoughtfully.



JUN 21 1912

July
1912

THE
RED BOOK
MAGAZINE

Vol. XIX
No 3

The BLACK HORSEMEN of MIR JEHAL

A MYSTERY OF THE SOUTH SEAS
TOLD BY HOCHDORF, THE NATURALIST

by
**JAMES
FRANCIS
DWYER**

AUTHOR OF "THE
WHITE WATER FALL"



ILLUSTRATED
by
**WILLIAM
OBERHARDT**

H OCHDORF, the German naturalist, sat in his big chair upon the veranda of the lonely bungalow, and peered at the narrow path that showed faintly in the gloom. A female monkey within the house was scolding her offspring, and the ceaseless chatter flowed out into the tropical dusk, a thin trickle of noise that was sucked up by the silence of the encompassing jungle. Down from Asia rolled the night, thick and oppressive,

and the massed trees conjured up a vision of many-limbed giants assisting at some mysterious ceremony.

Presently Hochdorf spoke. "I am ten times a big fool," he growled. "I had a letter that I wanted Gung to take down the river to Brechmann, and I forgot to give it to him."

Gung, the Malay with the withered arm, had left the bungalow some twenty minutes before Hochdorf spoke, and it was reasonable to suppose that he had

placed considerable distance between himself and the home of the naturalist.

"I suppose he would not hear us if we ran down to the river and shouted?" I questioned.

"No, no!" snapped the German. "He is out of hearing by this. There is only one chance of his coming back: he might feel that I want him."

The mother monkey stopped her chatter at that moment, and the night seemed to be relieved. One pictured that noise as something that was wounding the all-embracing quiet. Jungle and sky were one, a soft, deep black, and as I tried to make out the path down which the Malay had gone, my mental gizzard asked for some solvent to help along the digestion of the naturalist's remark. He had coolly stated that Gung might "feel" that he was wanted, and the observation puzzled me.

"Why, what do you mean?" I asked. "How will he know?"

"I said that he might feel that I wanted him," said Hochdorf quietly. "Gung has got a marvelous skin. *Ach!* yes. He can feel things like a stalking leopard. I do not know how. I can only say what I think, and I do not want to be asked for proofs. I hate to give proofs. This jungle is not a court of law."

He spoke irritably and I made no comment. When Hochdorf was in an ill humor it was wise to remain silent. And as we sat without speaking, the oppressive quiet of the place became more apparent. The silence seemed to rear up, a menacing, palpable thing that was ready to pounce down upon human being or animal that dared to make a sound.

But the sound came. From the direction of the river came the faint *plut plut* of bare feet; the rough steps creaked, and some one halted upon the veranda. Hochdorf struck a match, and the light revealed Gung, his withered arm hanging loosely by his side.

He stood without moving, his brown body, with its *chawat* of bark cloth, fitting in with the background. The jungle was old, old as the Blue Rocks of Bintulu, and the brown figure that had rippled the dark seemed part of it.

Hochdorf broke the silence. He drew himself out of the depths of the big chair and spoke in an even, quiet voice. "There is a note on the table that you must take down the river to Brechmann," he said. "I forgot to give it to you before you left."

The Malay gave a grunt and moved towards the door of the bungalow. A slush lamp faintly illuminated the big room that was filled with specimens. Near the door the native turned and spoke.

"I had some nuts for the black monkey," he said, speaking in his own tongue. "I forgot to give them to her, so I came back."

Hochdorf sank back in his chair without making any comment. Gung picked up the note, put a handful of nuts upon the pine table and faded swiftly into the darkness. The *plut plut* of his feet became one with the soft breathing of the jungle.

For a long time the naturalist remained silent; then he spoke.

"He said that he came back to bring nuts to the black monkey," he growled. "Perhaps he did. I do not know. Sometimes I think that the greatest *savant* that ever came out of Leipsic is a child compared with Gung—that is, on some things. Listen, and I will tell you something. It concerns Gung. *Ja*. It concerns him very much.

"Ten years ago I was on the Rejang River at a place that the *lieber Gott* made when he was in a temper; and to that place came a man named Herriott and his wife. They were Americans who had come across Balabac Strait from Palawan. It was not a nice place to bring a woman to, but Herriott's wife did not seem to mind. There are times in the lives of some of us when the big centers of the world do not look as nice as these spots on the outer rim. And the Rejang River did not seem lonely to Herriott and his wife. Not a bit of it! They loved each other with a love that was big, and where love is, there is no room for loneliness. This world is mighty small for lovers. They can look over space from their little hills of bliss. They can see Teheran on one side of

them and see Papeete at the other, and they think a crowd is a great big nuisance.

"Herriott was a big man in a place like this. I gave him work collecting specimens, and he was a mighty good collector. The fault with nine men out of ten in this infernal archipelago is their unreliability, but Herriott was different. He had no desire to rush away to the big spots, and he would do things that he was told to do.

"They had been here about seven months when I sent him up the river on a trip to get some specimens that I wanted, and he had been gone three days when his wife rushed into my bungalow screaming like a mad woman. *Gott!* didn't she scream!

"What is wrong?" I roared. "Quick! Tell me!"

"Clinton!" she shrieked. Clinton was the first name of her husband, and when she said it she looked as if she had seen his ghost.

"What is wrong with him?" I asked. And I wondered how she could have got any word of him when he was away in the jungle.

"He is in danger!" she screamed, and when she had said that, she fell down in a faint.

"It was an hour before I could get at the bottom of that business. Do you know what had startled her? One of the Malays had seen a strange white man going up the river, and the native had told her. That was all. Her husband was up the river, too. Do you see? She felt danger. *Ja*. I did not know their history. This is not the place to cross examine anyone about his past, but that woman's fear was not nice to see. It was the essence of fear. All my arguments did nothing. A white man, who was a stranger to the natives, had been seen going up the river, and Herriott was up the river. I tried to prove to her that it was some trapper that we knew, but she brought Gung, and Gung said that the man was a stranger. So it was no use arguing. I had to go out and hunt for her husband or sit still and watch her going from one hysterical fit into another, and she was so good at that busi-

ness that I thought it would be better to hunt for Herriott.

"That woman would insist on coming with me, and that made more trouble. Taking a woman to her husband in this jungle is not like taking her from Wall Street to Harlem in one of those burrows that you have over there in the United States. *Nein*. That place on the Rejang River was a little annex to Sheol. You bet it was. I was as mad as a hungry cobra when I ordered the Dyaks to get out the boat, and she crying for her Clinton all the time they were getting it ready. I thought it was a nice piece of foolishness, and I damned Gung for telling her that he had met a stranger.

"Why did you tell her about the man?" I asked.

"I do not know," he snarled. "I just told her and that is all."

"Well, we started up the river in pursuit of Herriott, and I was just bubbling with temper all the time. Six Dyaks, Gung, Mrs. Herriott and myself were in the boat—nine of us, and we were starting out to bring a man back from a collecting trip simply because his wife had got a nervous feeling about his safety! It was enough to irritate any man, was it not? Sometimes when I was swearing quietly to myself I would look at that woman though, and I would see again the terror in her eyes that I had noticed when she rushed into the bungalow. I had seen terror like that once or twice, and it puzzled me to see it then. That fool Gung saw the fear too—you bet he did. When the Dyaks loafed, he walloped them with the flat of his oar, and all through the next three days we pulled up the Rejang, fighting our way through the nipa-palm growths in a heat that made us gasp.

"We found out something in those three days. *Ja*. That strange man that Gung had seen was no one that I knew. He was not. The few men that were within a hundred miles of my camp were collectors and naturalists, but this man was neither. I was certain of that. The natives told me that they had shown him everything they had, but he was not interested. He wanted to keep right on.

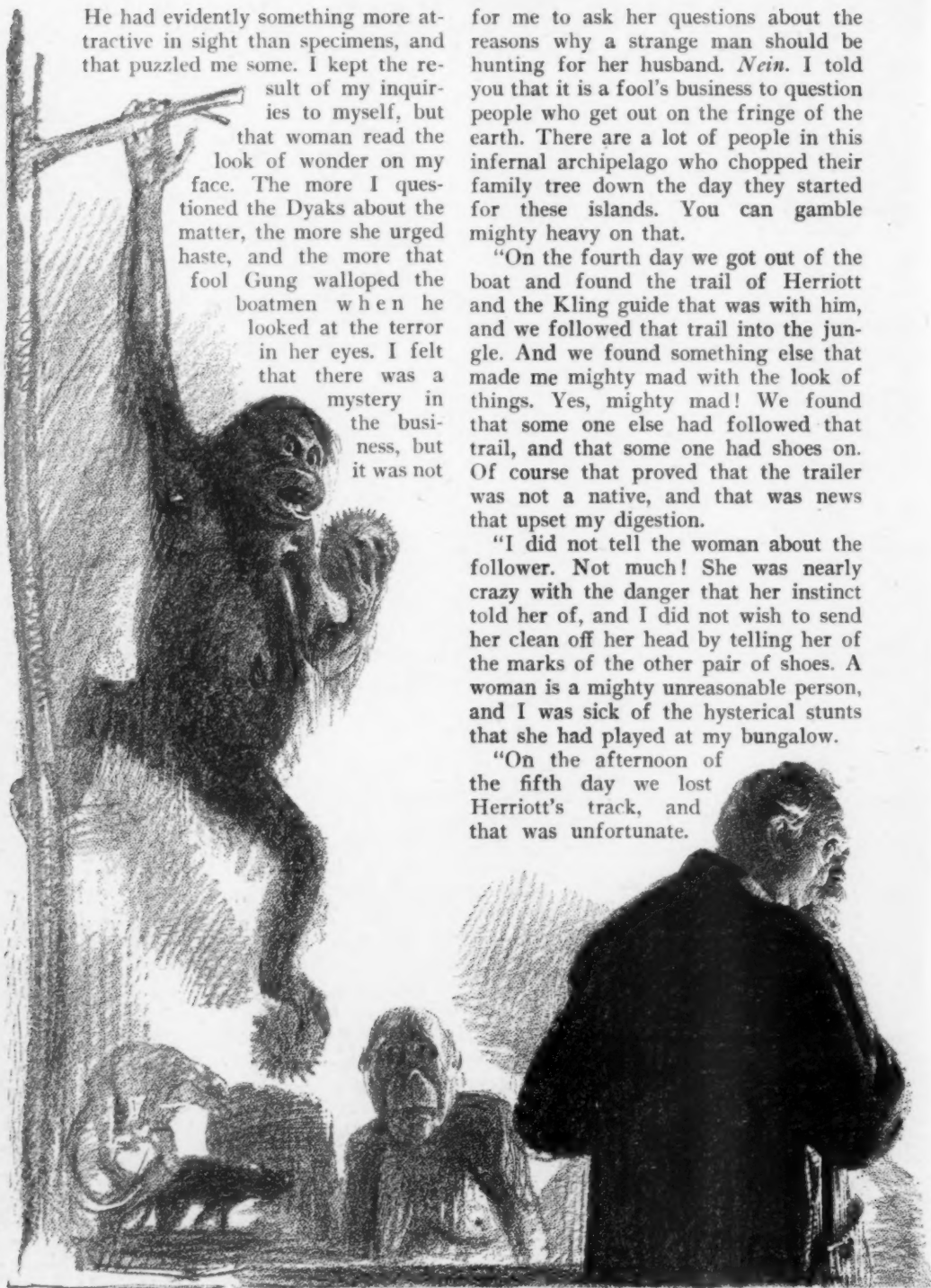
He had evidently something more attractive in sight than specimens, and that puzzled me some. I kept the result of my inquiries to myself, but that woman read the look of wonder on my face. The more I questioned the Dyaks about the matter, the more she urged haste, and the more that fool Gung walloped the boatmen when he looked at the terror in her eyes. I felt that there was a mystery in the business, but it was not

for me to ask her questions about the reasons why a strange man should be hunting for her husband. *Nein*. I told you that it is a fool's business to question people who get out on the fringe of the earth. There are a lot of people in this infernal archipelago who chopped their family tree down the day they started for these islands. You can gamble mighty heavy on that.

"On the fourth day we got out of the boat and found the trail of Herriott and the Kling guide that was with him, and we followed that trail into the jungle. And we found something else that made me mighty mad with the look of things. Yes, mighty mad! We found that some one else had followed that trail, and that some one had shoes on. Of course that proved that the trailer was not a native, and that was news that upset my digestion.

"I did not tell the woman about the follower. Not much! She was nearly crazy with the danger that her instinct told her of, and I did not wish to send her clean off her head by telling her of the marks of the other pair of shoes. A woman is a mighty unreasonable person, and I was sick of the hysterical stunts that she had played at my bungalow.

"On the afternoon of the fifth day we lost Herriott's track, and that was unfortunate.



"... his wife rushed into my bungalow screaming like a

Somehow we had got away from it in a swamp patch where the black mud was so soft that it had filled up the tracks of himself and the Kling the moment they passed, and I got sick when I found that we could not find that trail again. That woman was mighty near insane with fear just then. *Mein Gott!* yes! Her nervousness about her husband's safety was getting bigger with each step that she took through that place, and she was all to pieces. I could not say anything that would do her good. Not a thing! She felt that the danger to Herriott was big, and when I thought of those shoe prints I felt that she was right. But we could not find the trail, and we floundered about like fools. When the night came down upon us I was thinking that the best thing we could do was to make for the Rejang in the hope that Herriott would turn back, but I knew that the woman would never agree to return. Now I am going to tell you about Gung. I said that the greatest *savant* that ever came out of Leipsic would be a fool to him on some things. And I said the truth.

"We camped that evening in the thickest bit of that infernal jungle. The trees wedged themselves around us like the big grenadiers at Potsdam, and the lianas hung from limbs like the cobwebs of spiders. It was a nasty place. We managed to light a fire to keep off

the sweaty dampness, and we were huddled around that fire when something happened to Gung. *Ja*. Something happened to Gung! Do you think that he came back here to-night to bring the nuts to the black monkey? Perhaps he did. I do not know. This



mad woman. 'What is wrong?' I roared"

is Borneo, and just when a man thinks that he knows something he finds that the bottom has been torn out of his knowledge knapsack, and that everything has fallen out.

"But to get back to Gung: He was sitting on his hams near the fire, and all of a sudden he pushed his head slowly forward and stared at the darkness as if he had seen the three-headed specter of Bak Trang. Have you ever seen a man look at a little square of blackness with his eyes popping out? It gives you a funny sensation, does it not? Well, Gung stared at the night as I had never seen anyone stare before. It is a fact. He stared at it as if he was trying to see something up in Singapore, five hundred miles away. He looked so hard that the Dyaks who were busy blowing the fire, and who had their backs turned to him, felt that he was doing something out of the common, and they lifted their heads to look at him. Shades of Friedrich Heinrich Humboldt!—didn't he stare!

"It was quite a minute before I was able to fire a question at that idiot, but when I got my voice I fired one mighty loud. The way he was looking at the dark, and the way he was gurgling, gave me cold chills.

"*'Gott in Himmel!'* I roared. 'What is the matter with you?'

"*'Wah!'* he groaned. *'Wah!'* He groaned just like a sick *orang utan*.

"*'Speak!'* I shouted. *'Speak!'* I was that angry that I reached over and grabbed him by the neck and shook him till the shark teeth on his bracelets played a tune.

"I did not like the look on his face. I could not stand it. Not much! A little of that kind of poppy show went a mighty long way with me, and I could see that the woman and the six Dyaks had seventeen different kinds of nightmare from the stare that he was sending into the black patches between the *kala-dang* trees.

"I will choke you if you do not speak! I yelled. 'Tell me, Gung! Tell me!'

"He opened his mouth and shut it again because he could not get his words.

Then he wet his lips and tried again.

"*'The Black Horsemen!'* he moaned. *'The Black Horsemen of Mir Jehal!'*

"I have never been as frightened as I was at that moment. Never! I have been in a few tight corners in my time, but I have never experienced the same kind of fear as the fear that gripped me then. It was devilish fear. It seemed to me that a million cold hands were reaching out of the darkness to choke me. That is a fact. It might seem funny when I tell it to you now, but to me at that moment—*Ach!* I am sick now when I look back and think how I felt as I watched him.

"Herriott's wife and those six Dyaks had the squirming feeling mighty bad, too. And it was no wonder. The look on Gung's face would cool one's blood quicker than an ice chamber. I have never seen a man look like he did at that moment. And he looked at nothing, mind you. Nothing!

"The woman sprang to her feet and stared at the trees, and those six Dyaks did the same. Those natives had heard something of those Horsemen that Gung had mentioned. This East is a peculiar place. These people have mystery in their blood, and the very look on the Malay's face told that half-dozen more than you and I could read out of a book in a month.

"Where are the Horsemen?' I stammered. 'Where are they?' It was stupid to ask a fool question like that, but that little incident had stampeded my wits.

"They are going by,' whispered Gung. 'They are passing by over there.'

"He spoke in the dialect, and he pointed into the thickest bit of that darkness as he spoke. And it was like looking into a pot of ink to stare at that patch. *Himmel!* Yes! All I could hear was the jungle breathing as it is breathing now, with every minute or so one of those queer little puffs of wind that seemed to say 'Ssh!' as it slipped through the leaves.

"Herriott's wife clutched me by the arm, and the six Dyaks huddled together. We had little chills running races up and down our spines just then. Gung was still doing the pop-eyed

stunt, and he was doing it with all the energy he had to spare.

"What does he see?" gasped Herriott's wife. "Tell me!"

"I do not know," I said. "I have heard much, but I know little." I was mighty mad with the woman and with Gung and with everything.

"That Malay was squatting on his hams, quivering like a monkey when a snake is climbing up the limb of the tree it is sitting on, and he was listening with all his body. Not with his ears, mind you. He was straining the night with his skin. I would like to have a model of him in plaster as he sat there that night—that is, if a sculptor could put the feeling into it. It could be exhibited as something typical of this old world out here.

"Those six Dyaks had shuffled round till they had their backs to each other, and their faces turned towards the night. They could not see or hear anything, but they were satisfied with the look on Gung's face. They read that look. Their ancestors must have looked like that when the ghost *Mias* that the Kyans speak of, the big white *orang utan* that has lived a thousand years, came crashing through the branches of the *tapang* trees.

"Oh, what does he hear?" cried Herriott's wife. "What horsemen are passing?"

"He says that he hears The Black Horsemen," I stammered, and I kept my eyes on Gung as I spoke to her. I had heard something of those same Horsemen, but I had kept what I heard to myself. It is stupid to talk of everything that you hear in a place like this. It is only the people with the sensitive cuticle that can believe properly. I would just as soon tell this story to some people as I would tell it to Jan Winklekop, who ran the little beer house in the Kaiserplatz at Frankfurt. And Jan Winklekop was as deaf as the statue of Friedrich Wilhelm.

"Gung's muscles relaxed when I answered Herriott's *frau*, and he looked up at us with a curious expression on his face. He looked as if he had been hit with a sandbag.

"Tell me!" shrieked the woman. "Tell me what you heard!"

"I heard The Black Horsemen," whispered Gung. "They passed by in the trees over there."

"I tell you that the mystery that the Malay put into his answer took the breath from that woman. It took the breath from me, too. I have heard people say things, and the tone of their voice has given their assertions the lie, but with Gung—*Ach!* when he said that I got gooseflesh all over my body.

"But what are they?" gurgled the woman.

"They are the appointed of Buddha," breathed Gung. "They collect the souls of the dead!"

"That was a nice thing to tell to that woman, was it not? She was thinking of her husband and the danger he was in, and that fool Malay informs her in a whisper that The Black Horsemen of Mir Jehal, who had just ridden by, are Buddha's messengers whose duty it is to collect the souls of the dead! It was terrible. I tried to kick that native so that he would hold his tongue, but the woman pushed me away.

"I want to know!" she screamed. "I must know!"

"And that idiot Gung was only too ready to tell her. His breath had been shut off so long with the horror that had pinched his windpipe, that he wanted to see if he had got his speech back. That was the case. And the woman was crazy with fear as she listened to him. There is no fear like the fear that comes from the things that you cannot see, and we were getting some of that just then.

"Have you ever heard of The Black Horsemen of Mir Jehal? You have not? That is strange. You can hear of them from the gates of Kandahar to Bangkok, and from Cape Comorin to the Lanak Pass. I had heard the story before that night, but it had never impressed me as it impressed me then. My, no! It bit into my body like acid when Gung started to tell it to Herriott's wife in that jungle. It made my hair prickle. Right in the middle of the telling, a wet branch of a cinnamon tree touched my neck, and I, Hermann

Hochdorf, who has lived in this jungle till I have become a part of it—I felt inclined to yell out with terror.

"Gung was the devil of a story-teller. He was an expert. Your Oriental can put in all the little shivery business that is beyond our art. He told that yarn in a way that hit her in the emotional solar plexus. And it was a terrible story. He told her how The Black Horsemen of Mir Jehal were the greatest butchers that India had ever known. They had made rivers out of the blood they had spilled. They were devils for slaughter. Down from the Karakoram Hills they had swept through Kashmir into the Punjab, and men, women, and children were killed without any cause. They slashed and hacked with their crooked swords, and they galloped down the fugitives that tried to get away from them. They were fiends. The Red Butchers of Zafir Khan and the bodyguard of Tamerlane were so many greenhorns compared to Mir Jehal's batch—that is, if Gung's story was a true one. As he told it, he jumped from pigeon English into the Malay dialect, and from the Malay into the lingo of the Bugis, but the woman followed him. It was not hard to follow him. He was a master of all that fool wriggling business that Frenchmen do when they are telling a story. He was telling half of it with his shoulders and eyes, and half with his tongue.

"Then that Malay told what happened to The Black Horsemen. They fell in with a bunch of Pathans at Kabul River, and those Pathans were some fighters. You bet they were. They were big, hairy devils that would have taken on a batch from Sheol, and they went for Mir Jehal's batch like hungry leopards at a bunch of mountain goats. I would have liked to see that fight. It must have been something like the charge of the cavalry of Prince Frederick Charles at Froschweiler. *Himmel!* Yes! Those Pathans had a blood thirst that did not cool till the last one of The Black Horsemen was wiped out. Every one of them fell in the fight. The Pathans didn't leave a single one of them to tell the story, so Gung said.

"The imagination of the East got busy after that little happening. A Yogi of Benares had a vision, and he must have had a newspaper man's eye for something sensational. *Ja*. In his dream he saw the Death Angel standing in front of Buddha, and he listened to the conversation.

"What can I do for you?" asked Buddha.

"You can give me a rest," said the Death Angel. "I have grown weary collecting the souls of those that The Black Horsemen of Mir Jehal have butchered."

"And who will fill your place?" asked Buddha.

"Give the work to The Black Horsemen now that they are dead," answered the Death Angel. "Let them go out and collect the souls of the dead, because it has been their butcheries that have made me tired."

"Buddha saw the wisdom of the argument, according to the Yogi, and he gave the Death Angel's job to The Black Horsemen for all time. Now you will see how that stunt of Gung's affected us in the jungle near the Rejang. The Black Horsemen had to be on hand when anyone was dying so that they could collect the soul, and when they passed us by we were thinking of the danger that threatened Herriott. It was a nice story for a woman who was nearly crazy with fear to listen to, was it not? The Dyaks had no lost relations, but their jawbones started to rattle; and I had no one that I thought was near death, and I was mighty scared; but that woman— By the wisdom of Cuvier! she was in a nice state!

"What direction have they gone?" she screamed, when Gung had finished his story. "Which way did they go?"

"That way," said Gung, and he pointed into the darkness towards the north.

"Then we'll go that way!" she shrieked, and she started to push that terrified Malay into the thick night.

"Gung did not want to leave the fire just then. You bet he didn't. Your frightened native will cling to a live coal like a crocodile to a mudbank. But that woman of Herriott's was a de-

terminated woman. That story had made all her fears bubble over. Her imagination made her see Herriott's finish after that nigger had told her what The Black Horsemen went out for. She was insane. I tried to convince her that the fool Malay had been chewing opium, but she said that opium would not bring that look of fear to his face when he was staring at the night. And I guess she was right. I have never seen a look of terror like the one that was pasted on that native's face.

"Wait till morning," I said. "We cannot find any trail now."

"I will not wait!" she screamed. "I will go now!"

"She grabbed hold of Gung like a mad woman, and she pushed him towards the spot that he had been looking at. Gung did not like it one bit. He thought that he had enough of those Black Horsemen for one night without setting out on their trail, but he did not know what a woman who loves her husband can do when she thinks that he is in danger. That woman got the strength of three men just at that moment. She took that husky native and rushed him forward as if he were a baby, and I follow them. Those six Dyaks followed too. They were too scared to stay behind. They snatched some lighted branches from the fire and scampered along behind us.

"Belief, my friend, is just a question of presenting the thing that you want a person to believe. That is all. You might be inclined to laugh at this story of The Black Horsemen, but you would not have laughed that night in the jungle. The thing would have bit through the coating of scepticism that you have put over your bump of credulity. I am an unbelieving person sometimes, but on that night I was different.

"The woman started to cry out the name of her husband, and her shrieks went out into the silence. 'Be quiet,' I said. 'You will stampede the niggers.'

"But The Black Horsemen!" she sobbed. "My husband is dead or dying! Follow them! Follow them! Hurry!"

"Sometimes now, on quiet evenings, I sit here and look back on that night.

I try to analyze the feelings that gripped me. I am a German, and I am not easily excited, but on that night I flung my mental ballast overboard and did crazy things. I rushed along with the woman and Gung, plunging through the thick undergrowth, and behind me came the Dyaks, waving the fire sticks they had plucked from the fire. I was as scared as the Dyaks. I was frightened more than I can tell you. At Gravelotte, my friend, I did not get scared when the French were giving us something hot; but the French were flesh and blood, and they made mighty good marks to aim at. Those things that Gung was chattering about were somewhat different.

"I cannot describe that night to you very well. I mean the part of it between the time we left the fire and the time that the dawn came out of the Celebes Sea. I am in doubt about little parts of it, and it annoys a scientific mind to find that things are a little hazy. It was a fiendish night—a terrible night! I thought that the darkness was a blanket that was wrapped around us, and out of which we were trying to claw ourselves. Claw ourselves, mind you! Did the night ever feel that thick to you that you were certain you had a lump of it in your hand when you shut your fist? Well, that night was one of the thick kind. It smothered us. We choked in it. Sometimes, when an infernal snaky liana gripped my throat and nearly jerked me off my feet, I was in doubt if it was a creeper or an invisible hand. I was a confounded old fool that night. I was silly. That is why I say that belief is only a matter of presenting the thing that you want the person to believe in.

"We must have been running about two hours when that fool Gung got another of his pop-eyed turns. He fell on his knees and started groaning like the devil, and when the woman shrieked a question at him, he said that they were right in front of us. He meant The Black Horsemen were just in front of us. You can smile, but you would not have smiled in that place. I would have given something to be back in my bun-

galow at that moment. I was full up of that circus. You bet I was. I got that mad that I kicked the Malay in my temper, and I dragged him to his feet and pushed him forward. I was as mad as the woman to see what was in front of us, and to find out if that fool could really hear something. All I could hear was the sighing of the jungle and those little puffs of wind that the Kyans call 'the breath of God.' Gung was nearly insane with fear, and those six Dyaks were mighty crazy too. What with the woman calling for her husband, and the Malay gasping out the news of The Black Horsemen it was mighty tough. It was enough to send a man out of his head.

"Gung," I said, "if you do not stop your tricks I will strap you to a tree and leave you there."

"But they are here!" he moaned.

"Shucks!" I roared. "Do you think that I am an old fool?"

"But, master," he cried, "I heard them go by, and they are just ahead of us now!"

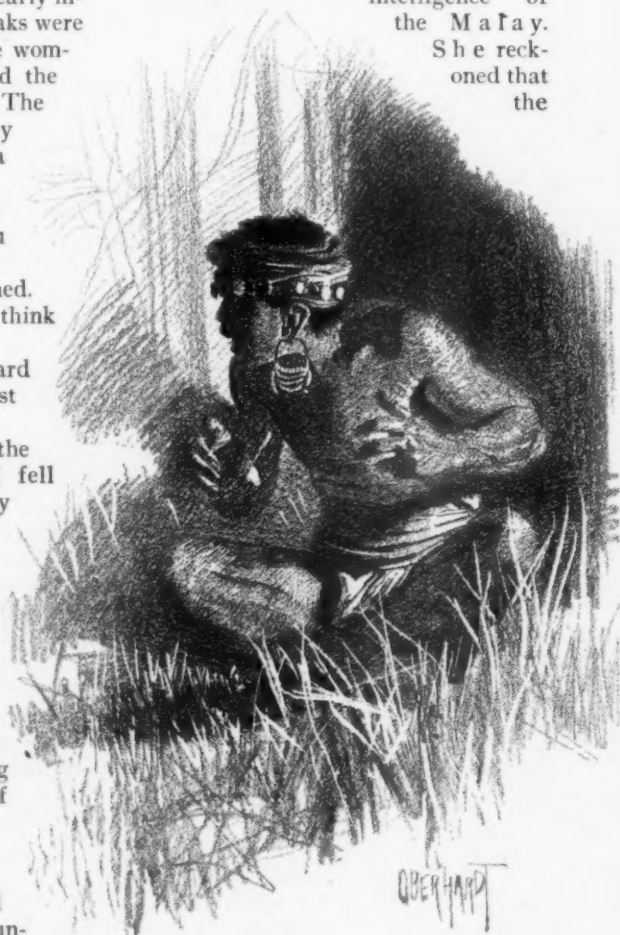
"I gave that fool a bang in the ear; and just as I did that, I fell over something and tripped on my face. 'Himmel!' I yelled. 'I will be mad before this business is finished. Bring me a light till I see what I have tripped over.'"

"One of the Dyaks ran up with a torch that he had carried from the fire, and I poked around in the jungle grass. I found that something pretty soon. It was the body of the Kling guide that had gone out with Herriott, and there was a little hole in the back of his head where a rifle bullet had caught up to him when he was running. And Herriott did not have a rifle. He had only a shot gun.

"You can understand the row that Herriott's wife kicked up when she saw that dead Kling. You can guess how she went on. She was a mad-woman for certain then. Some one had shot that nigger from behind, and that satisfied me that the fellow who was following Herriott

was not a friend of his. I knew then that he was an enemy who had probably trailed him from the United States to the Philippines, and from Palawan to the Rejang River.

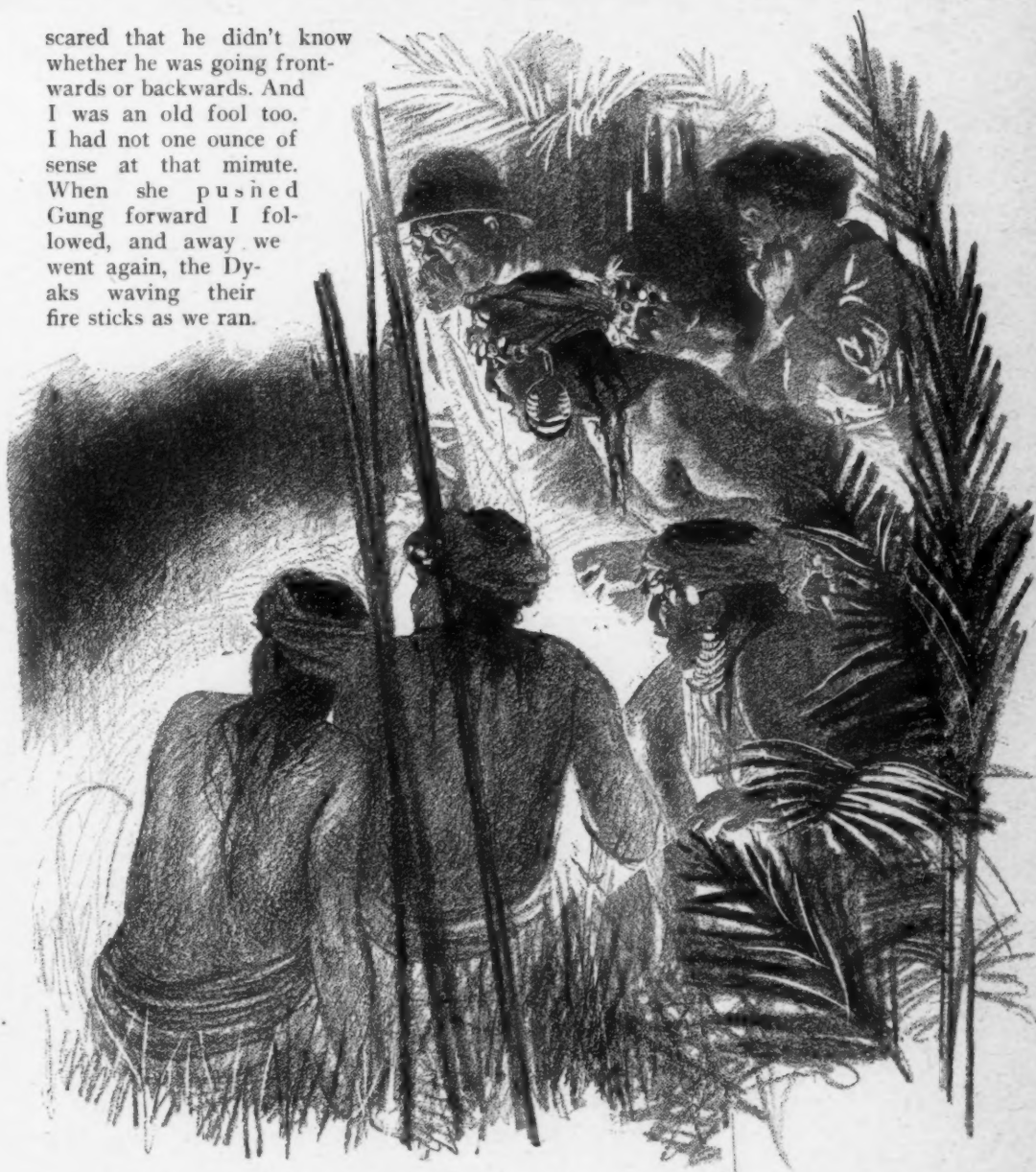
"It was too dark to see the trail of anyone leading away from that body, and I implored the woman to wait until morning so that we could pick it up and follow it, but she was gambling on the intelligence of the Malay. She reckoned that the



"Gung was sitting on his hams near the fire, and all

finding of the body proved that Gung had made good, and she would not wait. She was convinced that the fool nigger had seen or heard The Black Horsemen. My, yes! She was beseeching him to go on, and that shivering native was that

scared that he didn't know whether he was going frontwards or backwards. And I was an old fool too. I had not one ounce of sense at that minute. When she pushed Gung forward I followed, and away we went again, the Dyaks waving their fire sticks as we ran.



of a sudden he stared at the darkness as if he had seen the three headed specter of Bak Tsang. 'They are going by,' he whispered. 'They are passing by over there' "

"You know how you sense a danger in the dark. Well, once I thought that we were running along the edge of a precipice, and that chilled me too. I stooped and picked up a stone, and I jerked the stone into the darkness to the

right. I did not hear the stone strike anything. It just went into the dark, and not a sound came to me.

" 'Gung!' I shouted. 'Where are you going? Stop or I will kill you!' My nerves had gone to pieces then, and I

was as mad as a crocodile that has lost its tail.

"It was the woman that answered my question. She was insane, too; but it was a different kind of insanity to mine. You bet it was. She was insane with the thoughts of the danger that threatened her husband, while I was crazy over my own danger. 'Gung must not stop!' she screamed. 'I feel that I am near Clinton!'"

"'You are mad!' I yelled back. 'That fool nigger will be the death of all of us!'"

"I could not catch the answer she flung back at me. I think she called me a coward. I am not sure.

"I threw another stone into that spongy darkness to my right as I raced along, and I could not hear that stone drop. It made me sweat good and plenty. And I threw one more stone, and it was the same thing. If I could have got my fingers on Gung at that moment I would have throttled him. I would so.

"'Stop! Stop!' I screamed. 'We are running on the edge of a precipice!'"

"The terror that came to me out of the dark made me throw myself on my face then, and as I fell I heard Gung and the woman crashing on through the undergrowth. But I had enough of that running business. Holy St. Anthony! Yes! I was determined I would not run another yard into that darkness. Not one yard.

"'You old fool!' I said to myself. 'You have not lost your wits altogether. Stay right where you are till morning and then follow the trail of those two lunatics when the dawn comes.'

"My knees knocked together every time I thought of those stones that I had thrown. If you jerk a rock into the dark and you do not hear it strike the ground, it gives you a chill. Is not that so?"

"I stopped in my tracks, and I screamed out to the six Dyaks. I told them that I was going to stay where I was till the dawn, and those niggers were only too pleased to wait. They had enough of that insane run through the night, and from the way they chattered to each other I guess that they had sensed danger from that ravine.

"Those Dyaks clustered round me in a little group, and after the sounds made by Gung and Mrs. Herriott had been eaten up by the night, a silence fell on that place that was damnable. It was so. It was worse than any silence I have ever known, and when I put a question to those natives they were that scared that they would not answer. I was wishing that Gung was within reach of my fingers as I stood there waiting.

"I stood there till the darkness in the east became a coppery tint, and then I started to creep forward again. You know the quiet of a tropical morning? It seemed as if the whole world was waiting for something—and into that terrific quiet came a sound that startled me. It was the report of a rifle, my friend. Yes, a rifle! I knew that Gung and Mrs. Herriott had no rifle, and as that sound came to my ears I called myself every kind of a fool for letting that pair get away from me. I damned myself for an idiot as I dashed forward with the Dyaks at my heels. A million questions were turning handsprings in my brain. What had happened? Who had fired the shot? What had Gung felt that had brought him in that direction? *Himmel!*

"That coppery tint in the east turned into pearl and then into baby pink. Then we could see just a little. The ravine that I had sensed in the dark was there all right. My, yes! It was filled with dawn mists that were like ghosts, and I wondered as I clawed myself along the edge how Gung and the woman had dodged it. And those Dyaks were wondering too. It was something to wonder about, I tell you.

"The sun came up with a hop like he does here in the tropics, and as I clawed my way through a clump of rattans and reached a clearing on the edge of the ravine, there came the report of another shot. It came from the big gash in the ground, and the place was so full of fog clouds that I could not see anything. Not a thing! The mist filled that chasm like big lumps of cotton batting, and I raced along the edge trying to peer down into it. There is nothing so mysterious as a big trench in the earth that

is filled with fog—nothing. That place made me shiver.

"Those Dyaks were running up and down too. They wanted to see what was going on down there in the banks of mist. *Gott*, yes! And it was one of those natives that made the discovery. He had flung himself on his stomach, and he was peering down through the rifts of the fog bank. The heat of the sun was drawing the mist up, and when the Dyak made a soft noise and pointed with his hand, I dropped down beside him. I could see underneath that curtain. *Ja*. Down into the ravine I looked, and nearly three hundred yards down the bank I saw something that I thought was a bleached *tapang* log. Then I saw that I was wrong. The thing was moving, crawling along a ledge. It was going slow, very slow. It was creeping from one little clump of brush to another, and I held my breath as I looked. That crawling figure made me swallow with excitement, and as I stared I sensed who it was. You bet I knew. I could not see the face, but I felt who it was. It was Mrs. Herriott!

"Some one has said that imagination is but concentrated race experience. I think it is. Something in that woman's actions tied my tongue. My race experience stopped me from calling out to her. My ancestors had seen a person crawl like that, and I kept quiet. Every muscle in my body stiffened as I lay there and watched her. I clawed the ground till my fingers were bleeding. In the quiet of that place I seemed to feel the strain that she was under. I seemed to feel the hate that was sending her along that dizzy ledge. I knew everything, my friend. I looked at the big clump of bush about ten feet in front of her and I prayed. I knew she was making for that clump, and the Dyaks knew. They had flung themselves down and were staring at her with all their eyes. They had done a little stalking in their time, and they were calculating the odds.

"A puff of smoke came out of that clump that the woman was making for, and we heard the report of another shot. I nearly drove my nails through my

palms then. Of course you know why? The man that had shot the Kling was in the clump, and he was sniping at Herriott, who was somewhere down in the ravine!

"The woman stopped for a second when the rifle popped; then she crawled hurriedly forward. I have seen a leopardess crawl like she crawled then. Yes, I have. She slipped over those few feet of bare ground like a rock snake; then she gathered herself together and sprang!

"The mist covered that place the next moment, and with a mad cry I sprang to my feet and started to slip and slide down into the ravine. I beat those natives at that game. I was crazy to get to the woman to see if she had been successful. Somehow I felt that she had, and yet I cursed myself for letting her get away from me in the night.

"It was nearly twenty minutes before we reached that spot, and then we saw her. And we saw Herriott too. She was trying to lift him to his feet, but he had got a bullet in the hip and he could not stand. I looked at the woman and she looked at me. I think the wife of the primitive man must have looked like her when she helped her mate to kill the she bear that had invaded their cave. I think so. There was a look on her face that was new to me, and Gung's knife was stuck into her belt, and it had blood on it. When she saw me look at that knife, she dropped her eyes and kissed Herriott.

"That is all I have to tell you. I doctored Herriott, and we carried him back to the Rejang. I didn't ask questions. Not one! Mrs. Herriott gave Gung about five hundred dollars worth of presents, and when Herriott got on his feet they packed up their things and went back to the Philippines.

"But it was peculiar about Gung and The Black Horsemen of Mir Jehal, was it not? I wish I had a plaster cast of him as he squatted in that jungle when he said that he heard them riding by. I would think a lot of it. Never have I seen a man listen like he listened then. Never!"

Beulah of "The Sun"

By JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

Author of "Me-Lee of the North," "The Strength of Men," Etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY LAWRENCE HERNDON

MENDELSSHON, managing editor of the *Sun*, sat in gloomy and dejected silence, biting at the end of a cigar which he had not lighted. He was beaten. The city editor was beaten. Every man on the paper was beaten, so hopelessly beaten that they saw not a ray of hope ahead of them. For the first time Mendelsshon felt a fierce and personal animosity toward Cornelius J. Smith, who had set all of his scheming and his plotting to naught, and who, at the last moment, had given the *Sun's* axis such a tilt that the whole and splendid mechanism of the biggest daily in the state was, as his friend Oyama might have remarked, "enjoying a case of the honorable blind-staggers."

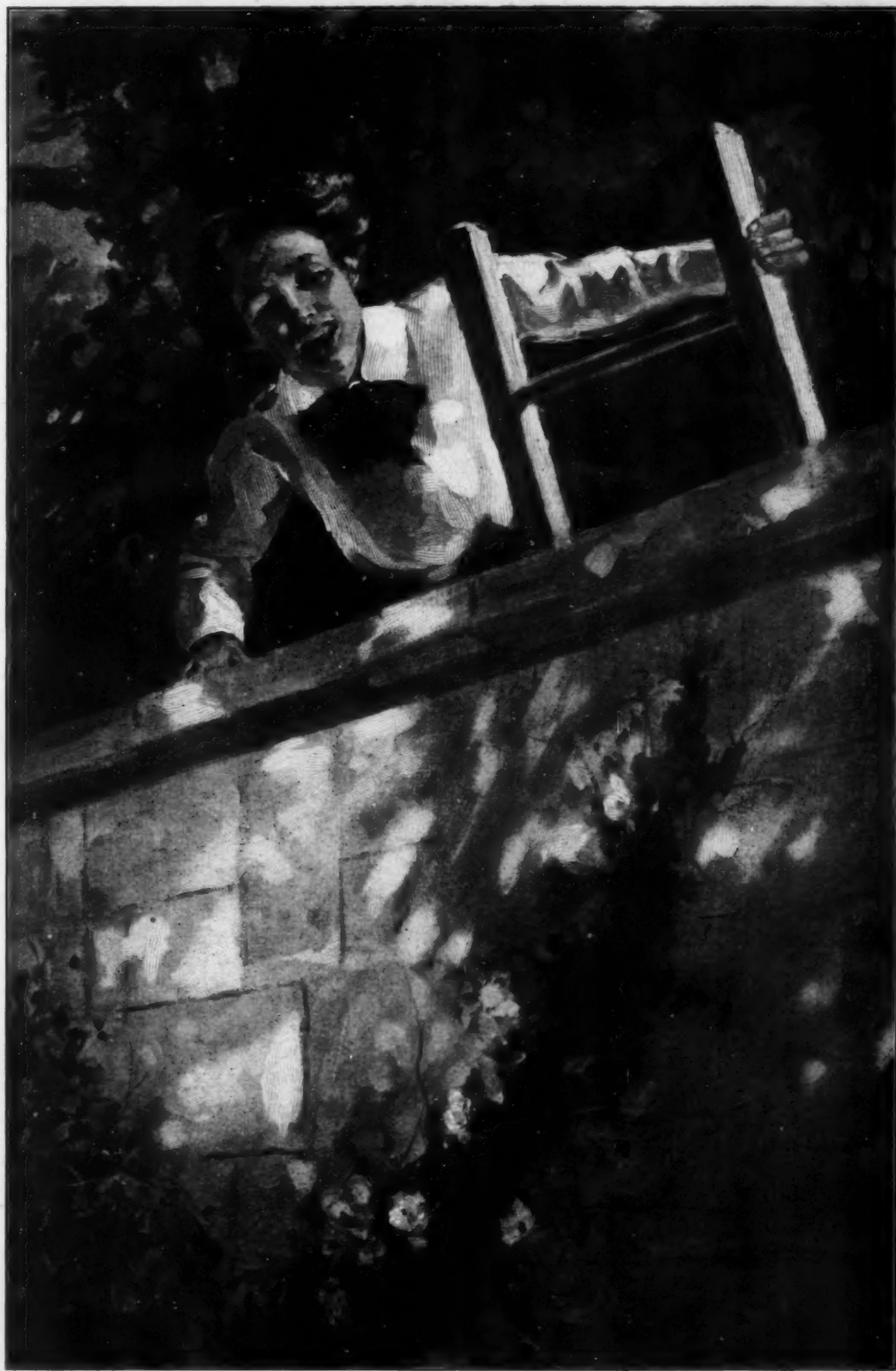
He had at least expected that Wells, their star man, who drew four thousand a year because of his genius for thawing human icebergs, would bring in some sort of story to hold up his reputation. But he, too, had fallen down with the rest. Not a word of fact could be printed. Only conjecture.

Guarded within the wide acres of his summer home, every avenue and path closed against intruders, Cornelius J. Smith held to himself the secret for which the whole state was waiting, that in its disclosure would have stirred the nation itself. The *Sun's* owners would have written out their check for five thousand dollars for the exclusive pub-

lication of that secret. Other papers would have given almost as much. But Cornelius J. Smith was forty or fifty times a millionaire, and would have laughed at the offer of such a mere bagatelle.

Was Cornelius J. Smith going to announce himself as a candidate for the governorship of the state? That was the burning question. And if he should—

Mendelsshon laughed a little savagely. He knew what would happen—if Smith announced his candidacy. President of the greatest central line in the state, an avowed enemy of the commission to regulate railroad rates, and one of the controlling factors in corporate industries and municipal traction systems that employed a hundred thousand voters, there would be but one outcome. He would be the leader in the greatest political fight the state had ever seen. And he would win. Mendelsshon was certain of that. The railroads would rise triumphant above those who had "oppressed" them, and who for two years had triumphed in the regulation of certain traffic and the bringing about of certain laws. Smith was the one man who could win for the railroads. Twice he had been urged to save the day; twice he had refused. This time, in newspaper parlance, he was astride the fence. If he ran for governor he would have not only the railroads behind him, but a part of the state. For the state liked



Rung by rung she climbed, until her head rose cautiously above the wall

him—especially the rural parts of it—as a man. Only such keen and far-seeing minds as Mendelsshon's reasoned out what would happen if he won. Day after to-morrow he had promised to give his decision. Every newspaper of any account had fought vainly for a "scoop."

At last Mendelsshon lighted his mangled cigar. After all, the other managing editors were in as bad as he. He

began to straighten out his papers preparatory to closing and locking his desk for the day. It was then that there came a timid knock at his door. Nearly all knocks were timid at Mendelsshon's door.

"Come in!" he invited gruffly.

The vision that entered always brought with her a sense of relief and pleasure to the gruff but honest-hearted Mendelsshon. A slight, girlish figure, almost childish in its dainty prettiness, the bluest of deep blue eyes, a red mouth half pouted in a token of regret for having to disturb him, met Mendelsshon's glance when he turned. No one had ever guessed that the hard, shaggy-headed managing editor had a tender spot in his heart for Beulah Crossman. A hundred times he had confessed to himself that he wished she were his daughter, to take the place of the one that had died—or that he had a son who might marry her.

"Hello!" he greeted gruffly.

"I want to go to Lakeland, Mr. Mendelsshon. I want to go on to-night's train."

"Lakeland!"

He gazed at her with an amused smile. It was at Lakeland that Cornelius J. Smith had his six hundred acres of guarded "summer home."

"I want to go down and interview Cornelius J. Smith," continued the girl.

"You — interview Smith — Great Scott!"

There was supreme disgust, tempered with amusement, in the managing editor's voice.

"Why—" he began.

"I know," she interrupted, coming farther into the room, and closing the door behind her. "You've tried everyone — even Mr. Wells—and I've done nothing but funerals and weddings and things with gush to them. You don't know how I *hate* that. I want to do *big* work. I want a *chance*, and if you'll let me go—"

The look of amusement had passed from

his face. With the quick lightning-flashes of an editor's mind it struck him that there was a possible chance in ten thousand that Beulah Crossman's blue eyes, her pretty mouth, the childish sweetness of her face, might win her success where the Napoleonic tactics of Wells had failed. He wondered, if she ever got at Cornelius J. Smith, what the wily old railroad king would do if



"You little pirate, I'll have you arrested"

she pouted her red mouth at him as she was pouting it now.

"Bet your life you can go," he exploded suddenly. "Here—" He turned to his desk. "Here's an order on the cashier for twenty-five dollars expense money. Now—skiddoo!"

II

It was nearly nine o'clock that night when Beulah got off at the little flag station at Lakeland. Only during the summer months did trains stop there at all, and on this particular train there were usually few passengers for the summer hotel half a mile distant, except at week-ends. There was no carriage at the station. Two or three young men, rough and slouchy, and as many small boys, hung about, but she passed them swiftly. The suitcase that she carried was very light, and with the newspaper woman's independence she laughed softly to herself that she "would paddle her own canoe" up to the hotel, which she had visited several times before.

As yet she had evolved no plan for approaching Cornelius J. Smith. She realized that even to see him and get a word from his lips, if not a single word of the news she was after, would be a triumph for her. It occurred to her that she might apply for a position as maid at the big house, or that she might pass safely through the lines to Cornelius' inner sanctum as a charity worker for the village church two miles farther up the lake. As quickly as they had come she discarded these schemes, for she was not yet enough hardened to newspaper work to concede the necessity of eavesdropping and fraud. She reached the hotel still in a quandary, secured a room—and went to bed, leaving a call for the unearthly hour of five o'clock in the morning.

Fifteen minutes after the porter had awakened her she was up and dressed, and slipped out without any idea of waiting for breakfast. At a quarter of six she stood on the summit of the high hill which gave her a magnificent view of Cornelius J. Smith's summer estate.

Like a white streak she saw the ten-foot stone wall that wound in and out among the trees and shrubbery, the insurmountable barrier that held the railroad king safely aloof from the inquisitive eyes and questions of the world at large. There was no break in that fence. Even the massive gates were tightly closed. It completely encircled the buildings and at least ten acres of gardens. During these days of high pressure Beulah was confident that Cornelius J. never passed beyond it. Even the photographers who had worn paths around the wall had been foiled.

She began the descent toward it with a little sensation of fear tugging uncomfortably at her heart. If Wells had not succeeded in getting over that wall how could *she* expect to? Wells had told only the managing editor that he had succeeded in getting over the wall, but had been thrown out by two burly ruffians on the other side.

The Great Wall of China could not have impressed her more than this modern structure which she touched with her two hands. For several moments she gazed up at the top of it. Beyond, all was silence. Even the birds were strangely quiet in their busy hunt for early worms. Her breath came a little more quickly. How much more exciting this was than going to a funeral, she thought. And then, suddenly, her eyes caught sight of a ladder leaning against the wall, half hidden behind a clump of shrubbery. She almost gave a little cry in her excitement. Was some other newspaper reporter ahead of her, she wondered? Had he used that ladder? The fighting instinct not to be beaten—the one inviolable law of Mendelsshon's staff—rose in her, and she ran toward it. Rung by rung she climbed, until her head rose cautiously above the wall.

Below, and all about her, lay the sacred gardens, with their white gravel paths, their murmuring fountains and rustic seats. Not a soul was in sight. If there were any guards patrolling the gardens there was at least none near her. The thrill of adventure, real blood-thrilling adventure, filled her now, and she drew herself to the top of the wall.

Directly under her was a clump of soft shrubbery. She would land squarely in that, she calculated. It was a long drop, but she poised herself courageously.

"One—two—three—" she counted, and sprang.

A yell—a yell that was as surely masculine as her own scream was feminine—followed that drop. She landed on something that was not shrubbery, but that was *under* the shrubbery; and as she caught herself from falling, there sprang up from the sprawling heap he had made of himself, a man, still clutching a trowel in his hand. He was a young man—almost boyish in his appearance. His face was soiled from close contact with freshly dug earth, and the knees of his blue overalls likewise were soiled with it. As one scarcely believing the evidence of his eyes he stared at the frightened bit of feminine loveliness that had dropped down upon him from out of the clear sky above. In his astonishment he looked up, as if expecting to see another on the way. It was that look that saved the day for Beulah. When his eyes dropped to her again she was smiling at him, a little forefinger placed warningly on her pouted red lips.

"Sh-h-h-h-h!" she whispered. "Don't say a word!"

"Well I'll be—" began the young fellow, and then he stopped. A slow grin began to spread over his tanned face. Beulah noted that he was very nice looking for a laborer.

"So you're another one of those reporters?" he asked.

"Yes," said Beulah. "And you?"

"Me? Oh, I'm one—one of the gardeners, you know."

She flushed a little at the open admiration in his keen gray eyes. Never had she looked prettier than now, the pink of a shell in her face and lips, her eyes shining with excitement, her bare head a golden ripple and glow of sun-tinted brown curls. Her mind worked quickly. Her prettiness might win where Wells' tact had failed. She looked the young gardener straight in the eyes, and pouted her pretty mouth again.

"Please—*please* wont you help me?" she entreated.

The young gardener dropped his trowel and thrust his hands into his pockets. His eyes were very fine, but they were a trifle too bold, she thought, for a young man in his position.

"You want to see my—my employer?" he asked, withdrawing a hand to run it through a shock of blonde hair that was very bright and well-kept.

"Yes. I'm with the *Sun*. Everybody else has failed, and if I succeed, it—it will be the making of me. Oh, please—*please* help me! I'll do anything—*anything*—"

He was smiling at her now, so good-humoredly and with such honest admiration in his face that she was confident she had already triumphed.

"Are you willing to—pay—for the assistance?" he asked.

"I'll give you all I've got—twenty dollars."

He shook his head.

"That's hardly enough," he said. "It wouldn't pay me to risk my—job—for that. But—by George—I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll help you out for—for a—kiss!"

She drew a step back, her face flushing indignantly.

"You—"

"I mean it," he interrupted. "I don't mean to be rude, but my help will be worth that—and even more. It will be worth *three*. If you will pay me I'll tell you where you can find the old man. I'll put you 'on' so that you can meet him—alone—within the next half-hour. Is it a go?"

Alone! Cornelius J. Smith—and she—alone! Her heart beat more quickly. Her lips faltered. He saw her hesitation, the half surrender, in her face.

"Please," he urged, pleading with her own word. "I'll give you my word of honor that I'll do it nicely, and never touch you with these dirty hands of mine."

"I don't mind your hands," she said, and could have choked herself for uttering the words. "I mean—you know—your hands *aren't* dirty—no dirtier than mine. But—you're sure—"

"Absolutely," he said, knowing what she was going to say. "There isn't a

minute to lose—if you want to see him alone."

She dropped her hands close to her side.

"Well, then—here!"

Three times the young gardener kissed her squarely, in a most gentlemanly manner, upon her upturned lips.

III

Blushing furiously, she stood close to his side while he pointed along an angling path that led through the garden.

"Follow that path," he said. "It will take you to the far end of the garden, and you'll come to a little iron gate latched on the inside. Go through that, beyond the wall, and follow the path that leads to the grove, straight ahead. That grove conceals a little lake. And there you'll find him—Cornelius J. Smith—in swimming. He always takes a plunge at this hour in the morning, and no one ever goes near him because—well, you see—he's got rather a queer notion, a kid sort of notion, and never wears a bathing suit!"

"Oh!" she exclaimed.

Five minutes later she passed breathlessly through the little gate. No one had seen her. Just ahead of her was the grove.

She made up her mind quickly as she ran across the open space. If Cornelius J. were already in the water she would conceal herself and wait until he had dressed; if he were not, she would approach him at once. She passed through a narrow hedge of shrubbery, entered the edge of the grove, and caught the glimmer of the lake fifty steps to her right. Sixty seconds later she was peering cautiously around the edge of a low clump of willows. What she saw sent her heart throbbing up into her throat with excitement. So close to her that she could have touched him with a long fish-pole, Cornelius J. Smith was standing up to his neck in the chilly water of the little lake. He was scrubbing his bald head vigorously. His round, red face, as smooth as a boy's, glowed like a ruddy ball from his exertions; and suddenly, much to Beulah's consternation, he be-

gan leaping up and down, beating his fat arms and blowing water about him like a porpoise. This was as far as Cornelius J. had ever got in the art of swimming, and so strenuous were his exertions for a time that Beulah shiveringly wondered if he would leap entirely out of the water. She was just about to retreat when her eyes fell upon the jolly looking old railroad king's trousers, coat, underwear, socks and hat neatly arranged in a pile just beyond the willows. At sight of them a thought flashed into her head that almost took her breath away. She gasped—and the gasp was followed by a little giggle that Cornelius J. might have heard if he had not been making so much noise. Calmly and quietly she walked out and sat down on the pile of clothes.

Then:

"Oh, Mr. Smith!" she called sweetly.

Mr. Smith ceased his exertions as though he had been shot. He stood in a tense and listening attitude, the back of his shining bald head turned toward her.

"Oh, Mr. Smith!"

His head pivoted slowly on the water, until he saw Beulah. If it had been the ghost of his deadliest enemy, instead of the prettiest girl he had ever seen sitting there on his clothes, his face could not have betrayed greater amazement or consternation. He stared, bereft of speech, while Beulah smiled at him as she had smiled at Mendelsshon, pouted her red lips, and began to talk.

"I'm Beulah Crossman, a reporter from the *Sun*, Mr. Smith," she began, "and I've come to get an interview. Wont you please tell me if you're going to run for governor?"

She saw that Cornelius J. Smith's jaws were chattering. Ten seconds later he would have come ashore to dress. He had already been in the cold spring-water of the lake too long for his health.

"G-g-g-o-o away!" he chattered. "Get out! What the devil—"

"Sh-h-h-h!" admonished Beulah, placing a fore-finger to her lips. "Don't swear, Mr. Smith. Remember that whatever you say now will be used against you—or for you. I wont write anything but nice things about you if you'll be

nice to me. Isn't that fair? Now—"

"G-g-g-et off my clothes!" he commanded. "Go up to the house. I—I—I'll see you there in a f-f-f-ew minutes."

"I'm afraid you'll have to talk to me here, Mr. Smith," urged Beulah with one of her sweetest smiles. "You see I haven't any time to lose. I want to get my story in for the early afternoon edition."

"I c-c-c-an't!" sputtered Mr. Smith, spitting forth a mouthful of water that he had inadvertently caught in his shivering convulsions. "I haven't any bathing suit on."

"Oh!" exclaimed Beulah with a sympathetic little pout. "You poor man, I should think you would be afraid of catching cold—going in swimming like that. But you can talk to me from there, can't you?"

"No. Go up to the house."

"I'm not going up to the house," replied Beulah, arranging herself more comfortably. "I'm not going to move—until you tell me if you're going to run for governor. I'll stay here until—until you freeze to death—or drown. So there!"

Cornelius J. Smith's face was swiftly turning from a ruddy hue to purple. His teeth were knocking together like castanets. He looked about him hopelessly.

"See here," he cried suddenly, "if y-y-y-you don't go away I shall come out anyway!"

"Come on!" invited Beulah pleasantly. "What a nice little picture we can make of that, Mr. Smith—in crayon, you know, and we'll surely give it four or six columns on our front page. Please come out!"

"You little pirate!" he exploded. "I'll have you arrested as sure as my name—"

"Please don't!" pleaded Beulah.

Suddenly Cornelius J. Smith stared—and stared hard. For the first time he took full stock of the sweet and child-like prettiness of the slip of a girl seated on his clothes. Was he in possession of his right senses, he wondered? Was it possible that this little pink and white vision—

For a moment the purplish hue

seemed to leave his face. In spite of the numbing chill that was creeping to his very marrow he grinned. He fought desperately to keep the smile back, but Beulah saw it, and clapped her hands delightedly.

"I *knew* you'd tell me!" she cried. "And, oh! I'll write it up so nicely, and never say a single naughty word about you—"

"You little pirate!" he gurgled.

"And I'll never tell how I found you—"

"Got any paper?" he asked.

In an instant Beulah produced her pad and pencil.

And there, up to his neck in the water, chattering and shivering, Cornelius J. Smith dictated to her his reasons for *not* running for the governorship of the state, and upholding interests which, though his own, would profit thereby in a manner that his conscience told him would be unfair to the people at large. And at the end, he said:

"That's all. Now—git!"

And Beulah "got," hesitating just long enough to tell him he was the best man in the world, and that she would pray for him every night of her life. She was all out of breath when she came to the wall again. The young gardener was still there, and had a ladder in readiness for her departure.

"You got it?" he asked.

She nodded.

Grimly he stood at the foot of the ladder.

"It cost you three to get in," he said, "and it's going to cost you three to get out!"

And then, to his amazement, Beulah flung her arms about his neck and kissed him three times before he had a chance to gasp.

"You're a dear!" she called down from the top of the wall. "And—and—I wouldn't care—if some day—you came to see me!"

IV

Even the rival papers acknowledged that it was the biggest scoop of the year. Mendelsshon called it his "five thou-

sand dollar story," and the *Sun* so far descended from its iron-clad rule as to run Beulah's picture and her name along with the story. She was the proudest and happiest girl in the city.

After the extra was out, Mendelsshon called her into his office, and there were actually tears in his eyes when, after swearing him to eternal secrecy, she told him how the interview had been secured.

"You're a 'regular' now," he said. "I've boosted your salary, and the management has suggested that it would be a suitable little act of appreciation on our part if we sent you off on vacation for a while. You can write us some general stuff, you know, and we'll print it under your name."

The next day Mendelsshon sent her word that a visitor was waiting to see her in his private office. As she entered the managing editor's room the managing editor himself passed out, a curious smile on his face.

Awaiting her was the young gardener. They were alone, and Beulah was conscious of a deep flush in her face as she gave him her hand.

"You see I—I haven't lost any time in accepting your invitation," he greeted. "I hope you're—not displeased with me—because of—of yesterday."

"No," said Beulah, her eyes dropping

in spite of herself. "You see, mine—mine was a hold-up, too."

"I've come on business," said the young gardener, still holding her hand. "You've made an awful hit with the old man, and I've come with a message from him. He says you're too good to lose—and I think so, too. His private secretary recently got married, and he says that he's sure you could fill the position to a 'T.' There's a salary of twenty-five hundred a year along with it, and—and— By George! wont you come?"

His eagerness was almost explosive. She looked up quickly. In his eyes was a look that drew a little of the color from her cheeks.

"You—you want me to come?" she asked, before she had thought.

"Yes. I want you to come—even more than the old man."

Suddenly Mendelsshon, chewing at the end of a cigar as he waited outside, heard her clear, rippling laugh.

"And to think that I don't even know your name!" she exclaimed, the roguish sweetness returning into her eyes.

"Oh, names don't cut much ice—sometimes," replied the young gardener. "My name's Cornelius, too. They call me Con for short. You see, Cornelius J. is my father."

THE story on the next page is the third of Ellis Parker Butler's "Adventures of the Five Cupids." The fourth, "The Lady with the Overshoe," will be in the August Red Book Magazine. Mr. Butler's name at the head of a story guarantees it to be a gem of humor. If you enjoy a laugh—and who doesn't?—don't miss any of these stories.

The Lady With the Reluctant Lover

The Adventure of the
third of the five Cupids

By ELLIS PARKER BUTLER

Author of
"Pigs is Pigs," "The
Lady With the Pig," etc.

Illustrated with Drawings
by
REA IRVIN

WHEN the small red automobile, bearing what was left of the jolly party of five—called by Mrs. Fogarty "the five Cupids"—neared the large town of Trentway, in New Jersey, Mr. Winston shook his head doubtfully.

"We have had everything possible happen since we left the inn," he said, "except ignition trouble, and now we are going to have that. We are running on three cylinders now, and I know what is the matter. My batteries are going dead. If we can reach Trentway we will be all right, for I will buy some fresh batteries."

"And if we don't reach Trentway," laughed Mr. Brimmer, who was the pinkest of the five Cupids, "the three of



us will have to get out and push. If there is anything I love, it is to push an automobile."

"You will push a lot!" laughed Mr. Winston. "If all four of you were still here, not one of you would push."

"Very well," said Mr. Wellaway. "Now, we will not push! If Mr. Flamb and Mr. Gorse could desert this car just because they were afraid they might have to push it, I shall not push it. How about that, Brimmer?"

"Not a push!" said Mr. Brimmer, good-naturedly, and he had hardly said it before the old car came to a full stop. Mr. Winston got out of his seat and, opening his battery box, looked at the batteries. Then he tested them.

"I believe, if I cut out these two dead

THE LADY WITH THE RELUCTANT LOVER 439

ones," he said, "we can limp into Trentway with the other four, but you men may have to walk."

"Very well," said Mr. Brimmer, good-naturedly. "If I have to walk, I will start now, for I'm a slow walker. Are you coming, Wellaway?"

"No, I am not," said Mr. Wellaway. "I don't walk until I have to."

"Then here goes," said Mr. Brimmer, getting out of the car. "And if you don't meet me before you get to Trentway, you'll find me at George Rogers' cigar shop, opposite the Trentway Theatre, on Main Street. He's an old friend of mine."

The jolly party of five had run over in Mr. Winston's red car—an old and decrepit car indeed—to eat a duckling dinner at the Fogarty Inn in New Jersey, but already they had lost two of the party (Mr. Gorse and Mr. Flamb) and Mr. Winston eyed Brimmer's departure with cheerful disapproval.

"Now, don't you run off as Gorse and Flamb did," he called after Mr. Brimmer.

"Not much!" Mr. Brimmer called back. "I'll stick by the ship, yo he! yo ho!" And he continued on his way.

Trentway was not as distant as he had supposed, and Mr. Brimmer found his way to George Rogers' cigar shop. George was there, just as big and jolly and good-natured as Mr. Brimmer himself, and he came from behind his counter and shook hands heartily.

"Old fatty Brimmer!" he said, with delight.

"Hey now! Call me Cupid Brimmer," said Mr. Brimmer, laughing until every ounce of his fat shook; and he

told why he was in New Jersey and not on Long Island.

"All right, Cupid," said Rogers, "and I'd take you out and buy you a cool drink if that clerk of mine wasn't off for the day. Ball game. It's years since I saw you, Brimmer. Married?"

"Oh, sure!" said Mr. Brimmer, happily. "Three children, George. You?"

"Nope! Still a bachelor. Still a gay old bachelor, Brimmer, but I'm afraid leap year will get me. So you have three—oh, come in, Miss Mellicks!"

The young woman who had opened the door was a young person of great charm of manner and beauty of face, as Mr. Brimmer saw by the glance he gave her before he stepped

back out of the way. He turned his back and studied the advertising hangers on the wall, for in these days some women, who are embarrassed to be seen buying cigarettes, smoke them.

Oh, George!" he heard her say, reproachfully.

"Sorry, Miss Mellicks," said Mr. Rogers. "I can't leave the shop this afternoon. Henry is away."

"But just for ten minutes," begged Miss Mellicks. "It will not take ten minutes. Just the last of the third scene of the third act."

"I can't close the shop," Rogers pleaded. "Let one of the other fellows take the part for this rehearsal."

"But that's just what we don't want, George," she said. "We have the basket, and we have two strong men—very strong looking men—and we want to try that part before to-night. We want to be sure they will not drop you, as they did last night, and you know none of the other men are—are—"



He was the pinkest of the five cupids

"So weighty?" Rogers laughed.

"Well, so weighty, then," laughed Miss Mellicks. "And these two new men—"

"Where did you pick up two men strong enough to carry little George?" asked Rogers.

"Oh, I don't know. I believe they offered to do it," said Miss Mellicks, carelessly. "Do come! You'll spoil everything."

Mr. Rogers turned.

"Say, Brimmer, come here!" he said, and Mr. Brimmer came forward. The cigar shop was a most commonplace cigar shop, on a most ordinary street, in a most every-day sort of town; and Mr. Brimmer and Mr. Rogers, while plumper and jollier than other men, were as far from being the sort that stumble into adventures, as could well be imagined.

"Mr. Brimmer, Miss Mellicks," said Mr. Rogers. "Say, Brimmer, will you do me a little favor? Just run over to the theatre with Miss Mellicks for a minute, in my place. It won't take more than a minute. You can cut out the lines," he suggested to Miss Mellicks, "and just try the strong-man part."

"If I can be any assistance—" Mr. Brimmer said, and before he could say more he was on the way to the door. There he stopped. "If the fellows I'm

with, turn up here, tell 'em to wait a minute for me," he told Rogers; and then he followed Miss Mellicks across the street. She talked rapidly as they went, explaining. The Trentway Amateur Theatrical Club was giving a play that night, and this was the last rehearsal.

"I suppose you know 'The Merry Wives of Windsor?' And *Falstaff*?" she asked.

"Not a bit," admitted Mr. Brimmer, frankly. "He was a fat man, wasn't he?"

"He was—was stout," said Miss Mellicks, "and that is why we wanted George to come over. We are doing the third scene of the third act now, and George is to be *Falstaff*. Last night the two men we had as servants couldn't lift the basket George was in."

Mr. Brimmer stopped. He showed his alarm.

"How is that? Do I go in a basket?"

"Only for a minute," said Miss Mellicks, reassuringly. "You get in a big clothes hamper, and we close the lid, and the servants carry you off stage. That's all. We just want to see that they do it properly. Last night they spilled George. It was comical."

Mr. Brimmer chuckled.

"All right!" he said. "I'm game. I rather think my wife will want me to



"Now don't you run off, as Gorse and Flamb did." "Not much!" Mr. Brimmer called back, "I'll stick by the ship, yo he! yo ho!"



"I get in there, do I?" said Mr. Brimmer

go on the stage when she hears what a star I've been. I'll write a book about it—"One Minute On The Stage."

Miss Mellicks opened the door of the theatre. It was a great barn of a building and had once been an armory. A couple of young fellows were arranging wooden camp chairs in the auditorium, and a dozen or more amateurs were standing and sitting about the stage, waiting for Mr. Rogers and Miss Mellicks. The whole place was dimly lighted, and smelled musty, but the actors were as if electrically charged—as amateurs are, on the eve of a performance. One of the amateurs put down a hand and helped Miss Mellicks up, and then gave Mr. Brimmer a similar assistance.

Mr. Brimmer stood and grinned good-naturedly while he was introduced to one or two of the actors, and his kindness explained.

"Now then, where are those two fellows?" cried the stage manager, crossly. "Here, you!" he called, as they came on the stage. "When this lady says 'What, John—Robert—John!' you two come in there—understand? And then she will say: 'Go take these clothes here quickly. Carry them to the laundress in Datchett mead; quickly! come!' When she says that, you take up this basket. Understand that? And carry it off the stage. See? And don't spill this gentleman out. Understand? Now, then, if you will get in the basket, please."

"I get in there, do I?" said Mr. Brimmer, and he clambered into the basket. Everyone laughed, for he got in like a veritable *Falstaff*. It was a huge hamper, as it needed to be, to hold Mr. Brimmer; but it was fairly comfortable inside, although a little cramped, for the top and sides and bottom were well padded, and rumpled

sheets and pillow-cases half filled it.

"Fine!" said the stage manager.

"Now, Miss Wrentz."

"'Help to cover your master, boy,'"
said Miss Wrentz, quoting the lines of
the play. "'Call your men, Mistress
Ford. —You dissembling knight!'"

One of the actors promptly covered
Mr. Brimmer with linen and dropped
the lid of the hamper on his head.

"'What John — Robert — John!'"

cried Miss Mellicks, and the
two strong, rough-looking
men entered and crossed the
stage. They slipped the straps
that bound the hamper into
the buckles and drew the
straps tight. "'Go, take these
clothes here quickly!'" she
declaimed. "'Carry them to
the laundress in Datchet
mead. Quickly! Come!'"

The great clothes hamper
creaked as the two men lifted
it by the stout rope handles.
It swayed gently as they car-
ried it across the stage, and
Mr. Brimmer held his breath,
expecting a bump; but no
bump came. Faintly, very
faintly, he heard laughter and
applause through the thick
padding of the hamper. Even
that one minute in the hamper
made him intolerably warm.
He was wrapped and swathed
in sheets and pillow-cases. He
tried to pull them from his
head, so that he might get air
as soon as the swaying pro-
gress stopped and the lid was
opened.

But the lid did not open!
Mr. Brimmer shouted, but
he might as well have shouted
into the padded seat of a sofa. His
voice was muffled in the thick pad-
ding. He tried to beat against the side
of the hamper, but his fists only re-
bounded from it. He tried to kick, but
there was no room. And then, suddenly
and without warning, the hamper
seemed to up-end itself, and Mr. Brim-
mer was turned feet upward, so that
he rested on the back of his neck and

his shoulders, and thus he went down,
down, down, down, step by step, each
step jarring him.

The blood rushed to his head, and if
he could have seen himself he would
not have recognized his pink complex-
ion in the purple face he now wore.
His eyes bulged and he gasped. Not
for years and years had his head been
lower than his feet, and now he was
almost standing on his head, and his



The two strong —

head was wrapped in sheets and pillow-
cases! He decided he was near death,
and just as he reached the point of
misery where he was sure death was at
hand, the hamper righted itself and fell
with a bump that jarred every atom of
fat on Mr. Brimmer's bones. Thank
heaven! If the trip from the stage to
the wings was like this, he pitied poor
Rogers! But now it was over.

THE LADY WITH THE RELUCTANT LOVER 443

But it was not over; the hamper was moving again—not down, down, down this time; not swaying as at first, but bouncingly. A tremendous rage—the rage of a good-natured man when he becomes really angry—filled Mr. Brimmer's soul. He boiled. What sort of a trick was this to play on an inoffensive stranger who had been willing, in the kindness of his heart, to help those in difficulty? Perhaps those amateur ac-

dragged over paving stones none too smooth; but what would paving-stones be doing in a theatre?

Then with the suddenness of a flash of lightning there came a memory. *Falstaff* was dumped into a pond, wasn't he? That was the end of the trip, wasn't it? Did these amateurs mean to dump him in a pond? A cold chill ran through him as he recalled something about *al fresco* performances he had heard of—plays played outdoors in their natural surroundings. Was a frog pond, somewhere, to be his natural surrounding? A nice sport for a respectable, married, plump, pink lawyer! He fought with the sheet that clung to his head. He bit it.

In Mr. Brimmer's pocket was a small pen-knife. He recalled, with horror, that he had, two weeks before, broken the larger blade short off while opening a catsup bottle; but the small blade still remained, and Mr. Brimmer raised his right shoulder until he could get his left hand in his right-hand vest pocket where the knife lay. His backbone was pressing against a hard, cruel lump, and he knew this must be the rope handle at one end of the hamper. He bent his chin to his chest and reached far forward to where the rope handle must be concealed under the padding. Very cautiously he slit the ticking that held the padding, and dragged out the excelsior with his fingers. There was the rope handle! Careful-



— rough-looking men

tors thought this was sport; it was no sport for Mr. Brimmer, and he would let them know it. He shouted. He yelled. His yells and his shouts sank into the thick padding and were lost. What were they doing with him, anyway? He tried to be calm enough to fathom the meaning of the joggling progress he seemed to be making. It was as if he were in a cart, being

ly he sawed at the rope with his thin knife blade until it was severed, and the rope could be drawn into the hamper. He slid his head along until one eye came opposite the hole through which one round of the rope had been drawn. What he saw filled him with amazement.

He saw two legs—two legs of a man, from the knees downward—encased in soiled blue overalls; and beyond them



The hamper made him intolerably warm. He was wrapped and swathed in sheets and pillow cases

was a wide, gray, undulating mass that he knew was the back of a horse. He knew it was the back of a horse because he saw the ears of the horse further on, but that was all he could see. The legs and the horse hid all else. Mr. Brimmer was being carried away in a wagon!

He had no doubt now that he was to be dumped into an *al fresco* frog pond and his anger was greater than ever. He slit the ticking near his face and dragged out the excelsior. Before that should happen, he would carve his way out of the hamper. He ran the thin blade between the willow reticulations of the hamper. Instantly something happened. To Mr. Brimmer it felt like the end of the world, but it was only the man that had been sitting on the basket, who gave it a vigorous kick with the back of his heel, for the blade of the knife had found his calf and had entered it. He gave the side of the hamper two more kicks, as a warning, and for a moment Mr. Brimmer subsided.

But only for a moment. Then, cautiously, he began cutting the hamper where the side joined the bottom. With the withe, he severed the willow, cutting

his way out, and he had completed one side when the wagon stopped and Mr. Brimmer was once more tilted upon the back of his neck. He knew now what this meant. The hamper had been up-ended and shouldered, as a man shoulders a trunk. He held his breath for the bump that would come when he was set down, but it did not come. He felt himself going up, up, up, step by step, and a new fear entered his soul. He could feel the bottom of the hamper sagging where he had cut it, and still he went up, up, up! What if the bottom suddenly gave way? He was in no position at all—head down—to fall down an interminable flight of stairs. A fat man has no business to fall down—

stairs anyway. Up, up, up!

No light entered through the sagging bottom. It was evidently a deadly dark stairway. Here and there the hamper bumped against the wall, or against a coping, and still it continued upward. How many flights he went up, Mr. Brimmer could not tell. He had a dizzy sensation as if he were being taken to the top of the statue of Liberty, of the Eiffel tower, or some other perilous height from which he would soon be dropped. He turned sick as the hamper whirled completely over. For a moment he stood on his head and his feet both, and then the hamper settled gently to its original position and the lid was thrown open. Mr. Brimmer raised his purple, streaming face. He was an odd sight. Bits of excelsior stuck to his face, and strands of it mingled with his hair. His eyes were bloodshot from remaining so long reversed.

Standing before him with a look of astonishment and anger, was a stout woman of some fifty years, almost as large as Mr. Brimmer. She had black hair, and her eyes were black, and large hoops of gold depended from her ears. She might have been an Italian lace peddler, but if Mr. Brimmer was sur-

THE LADY WITH THE RELUCTANT LOVER 445

prised to see her, she was even more surprised to see him. He had been prepared by his remarkable journey to see almost anything; but she was not expecting Mr. Brimmer. That was quite evident from her face.

"Who is-a da man? What for-a you bring-a dis-a man?" she asked angrily, and the two strong men shrugged their shoulders.

"You say to bring-a da man," said one, indifferently. "Da man in-a da basket. We bring-a da man in-a da basket."

"You one heap big fool, Rocco," cried the woman, stamping her foot. "I tell you right-a now, dis is-a not-a da

behind her to keep back, but it was too late. A shrewd, sharp face looked over her shoulder.

"Say, what's the matter?" this newcomer asked.

"That is not—the man!" said the girl.

"Aint it?" asked the man. "I thought you said you'd have him up here. What's he in that basket for?"

"That's what I want to know," said Mr. Brimmer, angrily.

"Wha' for?" said Rocco. "Did-a I put you in-a da basket? Wha' for you get-a in da basket if you no wan'-a be in da basket? Say?"

"I want to know what kind of a nest



"Who is a-da man? What for-a you bring-a dis-a man?"

man. He no look-a like da man at all."

"We bring-a da man in da basket," said Rocco, sullenly.

"Ya-as! You one grand-a fool!" said the woman, sneeringly. "Where you get dis-a man? Say?"

"In da theat'!" said Rocco, mocking her. "In da basket! Jus' like-a you say."

It was evident she did not believe him at all, and she poured a stream of Italian upon him, while he grew more and more sullen. While she spoke, the door into the next room opened and a young woman entered. She was a beautiful girl, but her eyes were red. When she saw Mr. Brimmer she gasped and put out her hand as if to warn some one

of thugs this is: that's what I want to know!" said Mr. Brimmer. "Are you one of them?"

The man with the shrewd, sharp face stepped back. The two strong men, on the other hand, stepped forward.

"Me?" said the man with the shrewd face. "I'm a justice of the peace. You be careful how you call me names."

"Well, what does this outrage mean, then?" asked Mr. Brimmer. "Don't think you frighten me. I'm a lawyer."

The handsome girl with the red eyes pushed the two strong men back. She quieted the justice with a wave of her hand.

"I don't know who you are," she said

to Mr. Brimmer, "or how you happened to be brought here, but I can explain, I think. Come!"

She motioned to the older woman to follow her, and led the way into the next room.

"How did you get in that hamper?" asked the girl, and Mr. Brimmer explained.

"You see, mother," said the girl to the older woman. "I told you it would not work. Such things may work in Italy, but something always happens in America. This man I cannot marry."

"Not if a wife and three children are any difficulty," said Mr. Brimmer.

"You will pardon us?" asked the young woman pleadingly. "Mr. Rogers, not you, should have been in the hamper."

"I'm sorry he wasn't," said Mr. Brimmer. "He can get in hampers all he wishes. After this I would not get in a hamper—no, not if my wife herself asked me. Not if ten Miss Mellickses asked me."

"Ah, Miss Mellicks!" exclaimed the girl. "She is the wretch that is the cause of it all. It is she who wants George. It was because he has neglected me, and followed her, that mother planned to bring him here and force him to marry me. Therefore the abduction of you, poor sir. Therefore the justice of the peace. My father is the janitor of the theatre and knew all about the hamper. It was he who secured the two strong men to carry the hamper."

"Rather a nice, actively inclined family you have," said Mr. Brimmer.

"Ah, they are so good," said the young woman, patting her mother affectionately on the arm. "But America is not Italy. Here all must be done by law, and through the lawyers. Is it not so? Tell mother it is so."

"Yes, you should do nothing to hamper the law—or the lawyers," said Mr. Brimmer. "But tell me, did George promise to marry you?"

"Certainly; do you think—"

"Well?"

"He is always saying, 'Wait a month—wait another month,' and the Miss Mellicks and the Miss This and the

Miss That trying to win him away from me! By and by I am forgotten. Then what?"

"And you really meant to bring George here in that basket, and marry him before supper?" asked Mr. Brimmer.

"Of course," said the girl. "What you think?"

"And you can find strong men like those any time to do the work?"

"Plenty of them. Why not?"

"Hum. And you are willing to go to law to have George marry you?"

"I am!" she said, energetically.

"Well, my dear girl, I am a lawyer," said Mr. Brimmer, "and I'll take your case. I think I can explain the inside of a clothes hamper in a manner that will convince George. I believe I can depict a man of his size going upstairs on the back of his neck in a manner that will tend to draw him toward matrimony. Have I your permission?"

"Yes," said the girl, smiling. "I can trust you."

"I should think you could!" said Mr. Brimmer. "And I think you can trust George. George has to be carried off the stage in that hamper to-night. After I tell him a few things about traveling long distances in hampers, I think George will ask you to marry him before he goes on the stage for the third scene of the third act to-night—or else George will not enter the hamper!"

Thus it happened that when Mr. Brimmer reached Westcote late that night, and entered the Micmac Club, where Mr. Gorse and Mr. Flamb and Mr. Winston were around a table, he was not hurt by their jeers of "Quitter!"

"That's all right!" he said, good-naturedly. "I've been doing business. Settled a breach of promise suit for a friend of mine. Got a box of good cigars as a fee, too."

"You didn't take long, then," said Mr. Winston. "You got back soon for a man that settled a suit."

"I would have been home sooner," said Mr. Brimmer, "but I was hampered."

The Black Bag

By L. J. BEESTON

Author of "Red Diamonds," "A Sunset," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT EDWARDS



WAYMARSH slipped the bottle of medicine into a side pocket. "Thank you, doctor," said he, in his tired voice, rising.

"Well, and what do you think of the verdict?" asked the doctor, always busy, yet never in a hurry.

For a second Waymarsh was lost; then he remembered. The evening papers were crammed with the trial, verdict and sentence, which had been coming all day over the cable from England. A most sensational affair: a dentist had been charged with the murder of his wife; the body had been found some time after the crime, and an examination had shown the presence and effects of hyoscin.

The dentist had been found guilty, and the death sentence passed upon him.

"I think the verdict a just one," answered Waymarsh, only half-interested. What to him was this sordid story that had set the world talking? He had his own trouble, and his own mental illness, which was a wall enclosing his narrow life, and through which he endeavored to break in vain.

"A just verdict. Yes, that is my opinion," echoed the doctor. "He undoubtedly killed his wife with the poison, hyoscin."

He leaned back in his armchair, reflectively stroking his short gray beard. Waymarsh, a shy man, with a feeling

that, the consultation being over, he ought to take his departure, said diffidently, as he stood twirling his hat:

"I hadn't heard of such a thing before."

"Hyoscin? No, nor a good many people. You have never seen it? I'll show it to you."

The doctor went to where his black leather bag rested on the floor in a corner of the consulting-room. He brought it to the table and opened it. He took out from its contents a shallow metal box about six inches long by four in width, and, pressing up the lid, disclosed a neat row of very small glass tubes with mostly capsules inside them. From one of these he emptied into the palm of his left hand two or three tiny discs of a pink substance.

"That's the stuff, Mr. Waymarsh," said he.

The patient was momentarily fascinated in spite of himself.

"Not all hyoscin?" he ventured.

The doctor laughed good-humoredly. "Scarcely, my dear sir. There is about a seventy-fifth of a grain of hyoscin in each."

"And one would suffice to kill a man?"

"That depends upon circumstances. Nerves in a highly excited state could stand a dose that would paralyze under normal conditions. One of these would

send you into a very deep sleep, from which you might, or might not, wake."

"And two?"

"Two would be fatal."

"Instantly fatal, doctor?"

"No, not quite so quickly. Within a few minutes, however, would ensue drowsiness, coma, death." The doctor slipped them back into the glass tube.

The fascination of the thing continued to hold Waymarsh's lay mind. It was so utterly remote from his own line. He saw the doctor replace the tube in the small metal case, between one with dark-brown contents and another of pale-yellow capsules. There was rather a morbid glitter in his weary eyes. With what apparently careless ease did the doctor finger these tiny discs that "held the key of all the creeds." A seventy-fifth of a grain? Why, that would be scarcely visible to his near sight! And yet it had the space of wide, eternal night.

He said, in an almost-awed tone:

"Do you ever administer it, doctor?"

"Hardly ever. And, after this case, I shall be still more chary of using it." He shut up his bag.

"When did you have occasion for it last?"

"I gave a seventy-fifth of a grain to a man in delirium tremens."

"Ah, and it quieted him?"

"Oh, yes." Doctor Shaston was now smiling at his patient's interest. He offered his hand in parting. "Good-night, Mr. Waymarsh. Come and see me on Thursday next."

He stood still for a minute when the patient had gone, and he shook his head.

"Worrying his heart out over something," he murmured.

Then he called for the next patient.

"Worrying his heart out." The expression was more apt even than the doctor imagined.

Eighteen months ago Waymarsh, who kept a small dry goods store in a suburb, lost precisely four thousand, eight hundred and ninety-two dollars. In a briefer line: his life savings. These were entrusted to the Reliability Savings Bank, which suddenly collapsed. There was lit-

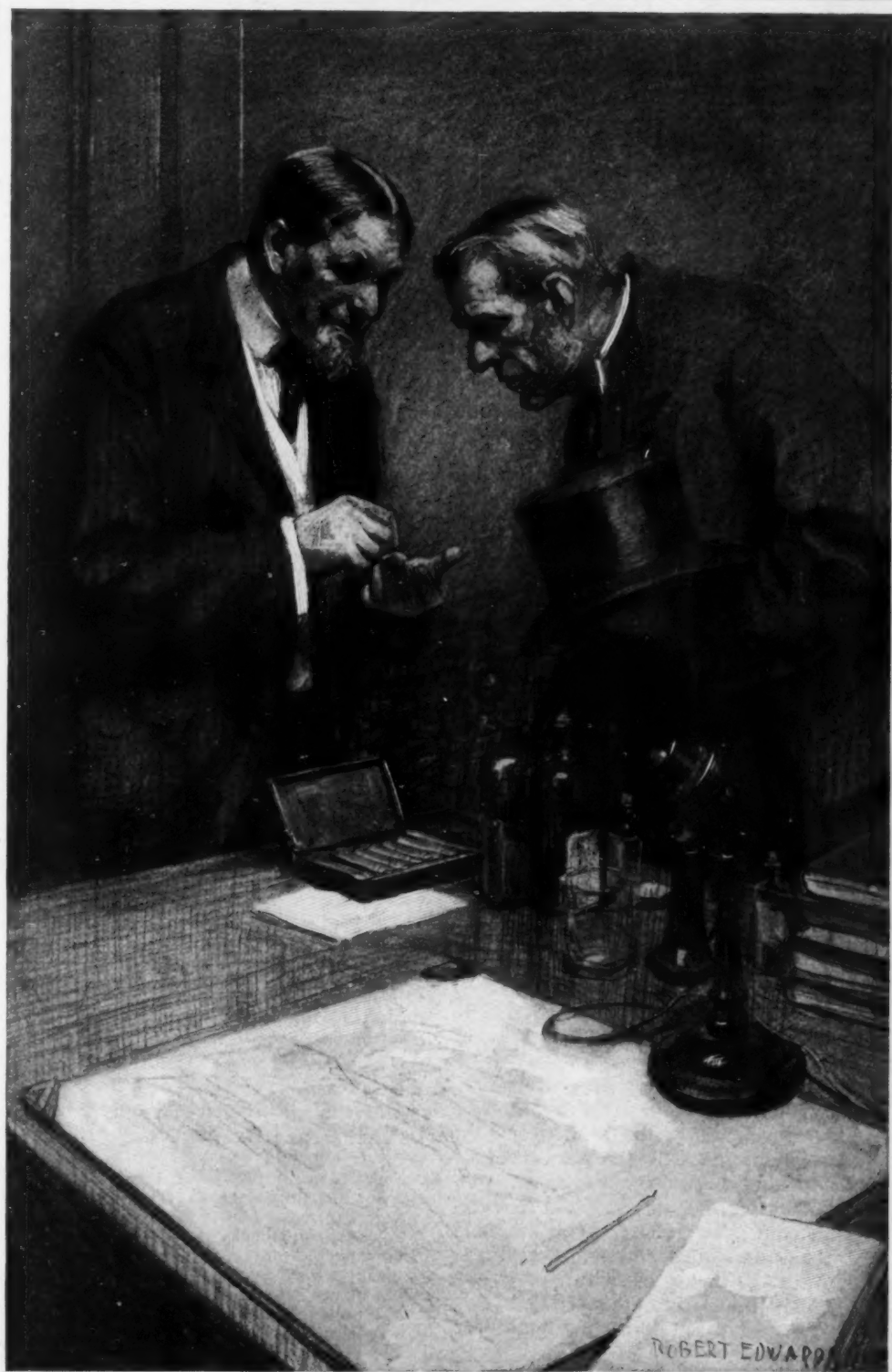
tle or no money for anybody; only just about enough left for the managing director's expenses, incurred by his flight from the country. Septimus Shard—his name—was brought back after some little delay. He engineered some plausible excuse for his precipitate movement to another clime. He was very angry when charged with fraudulent practices; argued, like the small boy, that "it wasn't 'im," only in more florid sentences. And because he really did give a more or less specious explanation; and because the finest counsel in the States worked day and night for him; and because Septimus Shard was extremely well connected with highly influential powers, he escaped with a year in the penitentiary.

It was a house of shame, but its walls shut out the curses of ruined men and the clamor of ruined women and the weeping cries of little children. Also it possibly preserved a whole skin for Shard, since public feeling was red-hot against him, and a broken man thinks easily of revenge.

Waymarsh thought only of his lost four thousand, eight hundred odd dollars. He was a married man and had brought up two children, both of whom had married and gone away. And the dry goods store being only in a small way, it had naturally taken him a long time to put by so much money. As a matter of fact, it represented, after deducting all expenses, twenty years' thrift—two decades of careful putting by for a rainy day, for old age. And Waymarsh was fifty-seven, and the business steadily declining before the larger concerns in the neighborhood.

It was a fearful blow, and the storekeeper reeled under it. He had a good wife, and he was a member of his Baptist church. His wife's loving hands supported him somewhat; and remembrance of such sentences as "Call upon Me in the day of trouble," put to the test, did not altogether fail him. He did not go under, but all the same he was stricken to the soul.

He was a small, plain man of not very liberal ideas. His dry goods store, in a dull neighborhood, was just his life,



From one of the small glass tubes the doctor emptied into the palm of his left hand two or three tiny discs of a pink substance. "That's the stuff, Mr. Waymarsh," said he

and in that back-stream he had been quite content. Round this small castle he had diligently built up a wall of four thousand, eight hundred odd dollars. The wall crumbled; everywhere he was open to the wolf. He sweated fear in the long nights, and peopled the days with pale phantoms.

He heard of Shard's arrest. Ah, that they would sentence him to twenty years—for life! Forgive one's enemies—yes; but not cold-blooded miscreants like this. Shard's life-story came out; his extravagances, his costly sins. Now God strike him to the earth!

When Waymarsh heard of that nominal sentence of a year, he wondered if Divine justice moved upon the face of the earth. For a season he burned with righteous indignation; then he forgot Shard. Of what use thinking of the author of the wretchedness? There was the wolf glaring through the breach in his castle—poverty, want, already at the door.

Between Shard's flight and sentence was an interval of six months. It passed; and the following year melted away.

Waymarsh continued at his business, feeling the ground sinking from under his feet. He could not quit thinking of his loss, and his nervous system began to go to pieces. His wife was troubled sorely. At her repeated requests he went to a doctor. Doctor Shaston gave him a tonic. Of what use being conscientious and speaking of complete rest, complete change, a tranquil mind? He did the only thing in his power.

And on one of his patient's visits they talked of the sensational murder trial in London, and the terrible powers of hyoscin.

A week followed that conversation, and Thursday night came again. The shop was always closed early on that day, and principally for the benefit of the local tradespeople, there was a semi-religious meeting at the church. Waymarsh intended going; but a miserable three hours at his accounts so dispirited him that he said to his wife:

"I shall not go to the meeting."

"No, dear. But it is your night for the doctor."

Waymarsh did not reply, but opened the pages of an evening paper, which he spread before him on the red cloth of the table. An oil lamp with a ruby-colored reservoir burned on this table. On the further side of it, opposite Waymarsh, sat his wife, a rather shriveled little woman with a worn face, busy with her needle. The small parlor was excessively neat and clean. On the mantel were framed portraits of Waymarsh's two sons, and portraits of their babies. A ponderous horsehair sofa extended along one of the walls. A claret-colored portière hung before the door. It was a wet evening, and the rain kept slashing the window panes like a shower of small stones flung upon the glass.

Waymarsh's wife, noticing his silence, lowered her work and peered over the rims of her spectacles at him. He was looking at the paper, yet seeing nothing, with the dull gaze of a man who cannot get away from the might have been. She gave a little sigh and went on with her work, knowing that he hated to be watched. The toil-worn fingers that held garment and needle trembled. Her husband's moody quiet, and the desolate beating of the rain, seemed to drag at her heart.

Awaking from his painful retrospection Waymarsh glanced at the opened sheet under his eyes. Suddenly he became rigid, his brows drawn together in a glaring frown.

He was looking at a sketch of the face of a man with a long, thin, aquiline nose and straight thin lips. He had seen this portrait times enough when it had figured in the papers at the times of the disappearance and subsequent trial of the financier. It was the portrait of Septimus Shard.

But why was it given again? A brief paragraph underneath it was explanatory.

Mr. Septimus Shard, erstwhile managing director of the Reliability, was released yesterday morning. Interviewed by one of our reporters, he was, perhaps naturally, reticent as to his future movements and intentions. We believe that Mr. Shard will spend a period of absolute retirement at the residence of a friend in H—.

Waymarsh stared malignantly at the name of H—, which was that of the suburb where he lived. Then he read the item aloud.

"How strange," commented Mrs. Waymarsh. "But I don't suppose that the paper knows anything about it, really."

"'Mister' Shard!" snorted Waymarsh. "He deserves the prefix, I must say. I suppose there are still men ready to lick the shoes of that scoundrel."

His wife sighed again. She was willing to forget those four thousand, eight hundred odd dollars, if Waymarsh would only let her. Why must he keep chewing the cud of that bitter fancy?

A long silence ensued. Waymarsh turned the paper with restless fingers. He saw a reference to the sensational murder case—a line or two describing the condemned man's life in his cell, but he did not trouble to read it. He heard the erratic thresh of the rain on the panes, the sounds of small traffic over the wet roads, and the faint sound of his wife's clicking needle.

"It is half-past seven, dear. You have only half an hour if you want to see the doctor; and you ought to."

"Yes," said Waymarsh in a dull voice. "I finished that bottle of physic to-day. I'll be back within an hour."

He left the room without looking at his wife. He used to kiss her whenever he went out of the house, but he had omitted the habit of late. In the little hall he found hat, coat and umbrella. As he emerged into the street the wind blew the door to behind him with a jarring crash. And for some reason for which he could not account, this crash of the door between him and his home, and his patient wife sitting at the table with her work, beat upon his senses with a mournful sound, with a lonesome sound, with the sound of a knell, almost. As he put up his umbrella he glanced at the lighted window over the shop. He experienced a sensation of guilt. How boorish he had been with her. Not a kindly word to help her on, not a cheery smile. Neither would have cost much, even if forced.

He turned up the hill, lowering his

umbrella as a guard against the drive of the rain. Scarcely a soul was out. Just before he reached his doctor's he passed his church, which was on the other side of the street. The service was over and people were beginning to emerge from the lighted porch. He quickened his steps, not wishing to talk with any acquaintance. A red lamp burned over a gate. He passed through and pressed the bell-push.

A maid opened the door and went before him up a single flight of carpeted steps. At the top of this flight were two doors, one immediately in front, the other to the left of the stairs. Waymarsh mechanically passed through the latter doorway, which opened into the waiting-room. The other door led straight into the doctor's consulting-room. A second door in the waiting-room led, also, into the consulting-room. This door, heavy and close-fitting, was covered with green baize to shut out any sound.

There was a woman in the waiting-room, doing nothing but look at the floor. Waymarsh deposited his dripping umbrella in a metal stand, and took a seat by a gas-fire, mechanically picking up an illustrated paper from a pile of such on a table.

In a few minutes he heard the outer door open as the doctor showed a patient out. There was a murmur of conversation, followed by the footfall of the patient as he went down the stairs and so into the street. Five seconds after, the doctor looked into the waiting-room through the inner door, and the woman before Waymarsh rose.

Waymarsh was left alone, waiting his turn. He could just hear the deep tones of the doctor speaking to the patient. He wondered what was her ailment. She bore no sign of illness, he thought. He himself was a prey to nervous tension, wrought upon his neurotic condition by the expected opening of the door at any moment; so, when it came at last, he gave a great start.

He passed into the consulting-room and took the usual chair by the side of the table. He felt cold and "nervy," and knew that his pulse would be found weak.

"Well, and how are we this evening?" said Dr. Shaston cheerily.

At that instant there was a knock at the door leading to the stairway. With an "Excuse me," Shaston rose and went to it. He returned in a moment or two.

"Will you pardon me for fifteen minutes?" said he, rummaging in his black leather bag, which stood in its customary position on the floor in a corner.

"Certainly, doctor."

Muttering somewhat incoherent sentences about "a lady—just across the street—nervous old party—" he dropped something from the bag into a pocket, and, taking up his hat from a chair, went out. The slamming of the door downstairs followed a few instants later.

Waymarsh sat for a minute, and then got up and walked timidly round the room. He looked at Frith's picture of "The Doctor" upon one of the walls. He glanced at the long couch and indulged in a morbid guessing at the number of patients who had lain there for examination, baring their bodies to the pressure of the doctor's fingers and the touch of the stethoscope, waiting for the verdict of the man who listened for a discordant note in the throb of the human machine.

He cast his eyes over the titles on the leather bindings of the contents of a book-case, and marveled. And then he caught sight of the black bag in the corner, and, of course, recalled the metal case it contained, and its glass tubes of mysterious pilules and tabloids, which included hyoscin.

Suddenly he heard the clear thrill of the patients' bell in the hall. The even-

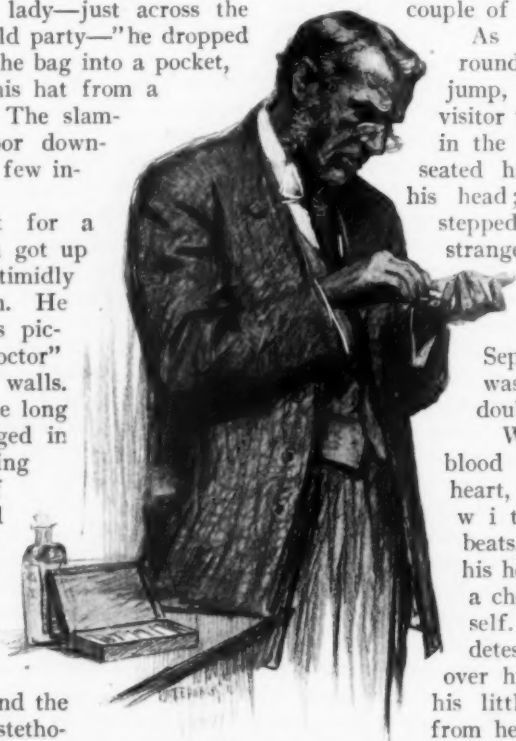
ing hours of consultation were from six o'clock to eight, so that this fresh-comer was late, for it was a quarter-past the last hour. After a brief delay Waymarsh heard a footstep on the stairs; then the outer door of the waiting-room was opened to admit this late patient. The door closed again, and the vibration that it caused, together with the fact that the inner door could not have been shut properly, caused the latter—admitting to the consulting-room—to slip ajar a couple of inches.

As Waymarsh spun round with a nervous jump, he saw the late visitor walking to a chair in the waiting-room. He seated himself and lifted his head; and Waymarsh stepped back, with a strange, half-stifled cry in his throat.

If the late patient was not Septimus Shard, he was certainly his double.

Waymarsh felt the blood surge into his heart, which throbbed with hammer-like beats, and then rush to his head. He caught at a chair to steady himself. Disgust, fear, detestation, swept over him in waves, and his little body trembled from head to foot. Shard here? So, then, the reporter fellow was right.

The late-comer moved to the gas-fire, spreading his hands in front of the steady glare. This took him out of Waymarsh's range of vision, and the latter at once began to tell himself that he had probably been mistaken. He had been thinking of him so much that possibly he had got Septimus Shard on the brain, and would see him in any man with a similar type of face. Curiosity prevailing, he stepped on tip-toe to the inner door, which he pressed lightly.



"One might suffice to kill a man; two would be fatal." The words started up in his memory

Waymarsh looked in cautiously—and straight into the eyes of the man waiting there!

It was distinctly a moment of embarrassment. In spite of himself Waymarsh felt a hot flush mount into his face, and he was on the point of drawing back and leaving the other to think what he chose, when the latter said, coldly:

"Dr. Shaston?"

The thought which ran like a flame of fire through Waymarsh's brain entered when the patient had spoken but the first of those two words. As vivid, as penetrating, as illuminating as lightning it came—the whole of it, the entire idea, complete, easy, certain, appallingly simple.

Waymarsh stood as if, turned to marble.

"Dr. Shaston?" repeated the other irritably.

Waymarsh heard the iteration, which had a distant sound, the sound of a remote echo. He hesitated long enough to show him that the delay was an implication of assent. Still, he would have drawn back; it was not that he feared looking a fool; it was that some fearful influence possessed him—some being that kept whispering to his wearied, tottering reason: "Do it! do it! do it!"

"Yes," said he, mechanically.

He stepped back into the consulting-room, and the other followed. In a heavy, dazed fashion, Waymarsh closed the baize-covered door. The moment was strangely unreal. He had taken the first big step towards the accomplishment of a frightful purpose, moving in a semi-mental paralysis. How much farther did he mean to go?

"Quick, be quick, before the doctor returns!" whispered the voice in his brain.

He found himself sitting in the doctor's chair and the visitor in the patient's.

"You are abstracted—over-tired?" said Shard with growing acerbity.

"Yes—a little. A—long day," answered Waymarsh, and even at that moment he wondered at the absolute steadiness of his voice. "What is the trouble?"

"A maddening pain over my left eye. Neuralgic, I imagine. Gone one moment, and back the next. Frankly, I have not much faith in dopes.

Can you give me a simple tonic to take the edge off this agony?"

Waymarsh put out his right hand for the pulse, as he had seen the doctor do. The patient pulled back his cuff, and he started at the other's touch upon his wrist, for the encircling fingers were clammy, icily cold.

Waymarsh, possessed by a devil, had made up his mind, and meant to go straight on. He was not conscious of any pulse action under his index finger; he was listening for the possible return of Shaston. Every second was precious, yet he must appear unhurried.

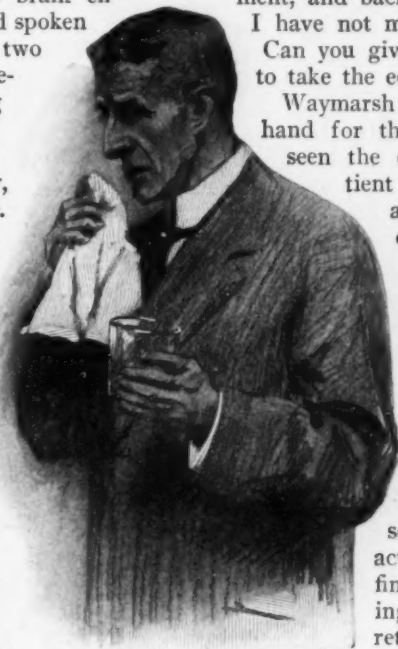
He recalled a remark which the doctor had used in his—Way-

marsh's—case, and he gave it utterance. He said: "Your blood-pressure is not what it might be; the general tone is depressed." And then he added—"Yes, I recommend a tonic."

He went towards the black bag.

"We must begin mildly, then," cried the other. "My stomach doesn't take to strong dopes kindly."

"Quite so," said Waymarsh. He opened the bag, and the first thing he saw was what he was looking for—the shallow metal box.



When he looked around the visitor was wiping his lips with a handkerchief.

At that moment he heard a sound at the foot of the stairs.

The shock numbed his very heart. God above, if Shaston was coming up! He leaned over the bag, feeling a cold dew ooze upon his forehead.

Fifteen seconds that seemed to encircle eternity crept by. There was no repetition of the sound, and Waymarsh breathed again. Keeping his back turned to the other, he drew out the metal box and pressed open the lid. Then a thought struck him. What if, after all, he was mistaken in his man? That would not bear imagining. He called out, in a voice utterly unlike his own:

"I will give you something to temporarily relieve the pain, and I will send a bottle of physic to-morrow morning. Your name and address, please?"

He abandoned the metal box for a writing pad and pencil on the desk.

The visitor hesitated, and that made Waymarsh all but certain; but when he spoke, any shred of doubt vanished, for he answered after the fatal pause, "Sherd. Eight, Timberlay Avenue."

A poor disguise of his notorious name!

Waymarsh stood up, frightfully controlled. Not a nerve quivered as he abstracted from the metal box that glass tube containing tiny discs of a pink substance, between two others of dark-brown and pale yellow capsules respectively.

"One might suffice to kill a man in normal conditions; two would be fatal." The words started up in his memory.

He rolled out two in the hollow of his palm.

Then he went to a portable little wash-basin in the room and poured some water in a glass by it.

"Swallow them down," said Waymarsh in a loud, hoarse voice.

He turned round so as not to see. A wave of night swept over his senses, but he fought it back. When he looked round the visitor was wiping his lips with a handkerchief.

"Good-night," said Waymarsh. "Go straight home and lie down."

Shard nodded and passed through the door.

Waymarsh counted the steps as he de-

scended. If he should be overcome before leaving! And even at this instant the doctor might enter the house!

Fourteen — fifteen — sixteen. Shard opened the hall door. It closed behind him rather loudly, and Waymarsh, uttering a terrible cry, staggered back and fell across the sofa.

Here sheer horror gripped him so that he could not move. He lay staring up at the ceiling with frightful, ashen face. The voice that had kept whispering in his brain was gone, and with it was going the strength which he had borrowed from hell. Perception of his peril urged him to an effort. He rose giddily and caught sight of the still-open metal case and the black bag. He replaced the first in the second, and put the bag just where he had found it. Wait for the doctor he dared not, with his livid face of guilt. He was half-way down the stairs before he remembered that he had left his hat and umbrella in the waiting-room. Cursing himself for the delay he returned for them, and left the house.

Between him and the gate were fifteen yards of curving gravel path, with a line of poplars to the left of it. Still dreading to meet Shaston, he darted from the faint glow of light into the gloom under the trees. The poplars swung to and fro under the buffeting wind, groaning, and heavy splashes of rain dropped through their saturated foliage. From one to another Waymarsh went slinking, and he had almost reached the gate when he saw something lying in a heap at the base of the last tree. He tried to avert his gaze as he went by, but he had to look in spite of himself.

Shard was lying there, lifeless; and the sullen rain-splashes fell upon his upturned face. He had reached the gate, and then the deadly dose in him had overcome his senses.

This thing which bore so small a resemblance to a man's body was visible at the head of the path, for the red lamp over the gateway flung a wavering gleam upon it; but a privet hedge shut it out altogether from the street. Waymarsh had but to dart out to be free. But first he must look to make sure. Three steps took him to it, yet in the horror



that was upon him he dared not stoop. But the face of the dead man grew slowly out of the dark. He saw the forehead first, then the pallid cheeks, and then the set eyes.

At that moment some one gripped his collar. "Ah, ah, what are you doing?" cried the voice of Dr. Shaston.

The tension gave way in a scream of terror. Waymarsh writhed, but could not shake off the doctor's strong hold.

"Let me go!" he shrieked, fighting like a wild cat.

The red lamp on his sitting-room table blinded his just-opened eyes. His wife was calling upon him wildly to awake. The evening paper over which he

had nodded was crumpled in his fingers.

Merciful God! It was then but a phantom of a crime?

His wife slipped down upon her knees and cried prayerfully:

"You have been dreaming about it, dear? Oh, can't you make one real big, brave effort to forget that miserable money and what it meant to us? It is killing you; it is spoiling our life."

Sweat stood out on Waymarsh's face. He said, huskily, "I'll try—I'll try." And then all at once he broke into deep sobbing.

His wife slipped down upon her knees. She cried prayerfully, imploringly. "You have been dreaming about it, dear"

The Fresh-from-the-Soil Product

By
EARL
HENNESSY



Illustrated
By
HENRY HUTT

MANY and of imposing grandeur are the architectural splendors that grace a certain portion of that New York thoroughfare known far and wide as the Avenue of Show and Parade. On one of the most important corners there looms an immense pile of rock, which is a cross between a medieval castle and a conservative national bank.

Should you slip past the front portal of this ornate structure, the interior would show an equal contempt of economy and sound judgment. The general plan is a family-hotel effect of sixty-six rooms. The number of baths stands equaled for reckless prodigality only by the number of idle, extravagant servants. You could bathe daily for two weeks and still not experience the monotony of the same tub.

Inhabiting this vast monument of wealth and incongruity are two persons—father and son. The father may be said to be approaching that state and age where his chief concern will lie in the giving of his money away. The son may be said to paint—and of a nature so poorly as to be wholly immersed in

his art. Yet at heart, beneath their urban, unreal, distorted exteriors, these two individuals are simple folks. It is the purpose of this narrative to prove this to you. The attempt, while sincere, imposes no obligation on the reader to remain convinced.

J. Darius Tanner, stock-baron and money-king, sat in lonely state, regal in his splendid lonesomeness, sipping his second glass of buttermilk. Behind him, in fitting regard as to precedence, ranged his butler and second man. In the immense, dismal dining-room, wherein he always breakfasted, the spectacle of this lone man eating took on something of the vast gloominess imparted nowhere so expertly as in a prison setting on the operative stage. The room was, perhaps, thirty by forty feet.

In his prime, Darius Tanner had partaken of breakfasts that coursed all the way from a cocktail opening to a grand finale of mixed nuts. Those were days of riot and youth and cast-iron digestion. The human stomach had since reduced his morning gastronomical commitment to a grape fruit, a poached egg on toast

and two glasses of buttermilk. The grape fruit, poached egg on toast and first glass of buttermilk had already been disposed of.

He sipped his simple-life elixir with that cheerless and suspicious deliberation peculiar to dyspeptics and connoisseurs. It was delicious buttermilk, having by mistake been expressed that morning to the Tanner mansion instead of to the corner delicatessen store. The lone diner gravely consulted his watch as he placed the drained glass on the table before him. He had consumed the proper and prescribed two minutes.

It was the custom each morning, ere the mighty money-king ventured forth for the day's spoils, for him to be joined for a few minutes at the breakfast table by his family circle, which consisted of his only son. At these *en famille* gatherings were discussed various light topics of temporal personal interest. But on this particular morning, the young man was late. Therefore, the father improved the passing moments by a desultory perusal of his morning's mail. Let the reader follow his example by a desultory perusal of the following matrimonial-agency biography:

Jack Tanner, the son, was as good-looking a young man as ever was to be seen at a first-night musical comedy. He was heir to millions and twenty-six, and had yet to be sued for breach of promise. He believed in work—for the working-man—but held a personal preference for Art. Viewed exteriorly, he considered himself a splendid though harmless ornament. Select society functions he attended—as a matter of social obligation—and tried to appear gracious and interested. Never had he been whipped by a cab driver and never had he pigeonholed a haberdasher's bill.

Twenty minutes were wasted by Darius Tanner in the superfluous perusal of his mail. Then into the vast, incommensurable, correctly funereal dining-room sauntered Jack.

He paused for a moment by the doorway, mutely interrogative. The paternal patience and industry surprised him.

"Morning, old man," he called, genially, as he strode across the room with

the buoyant step of the late breakfaster from whom is required no apology—and dropped lightly into a chair. "Sorry to have kept you waiting."

The father swept the air with his hand in careless deprecation.

"Afraid I'll have to cut out these all-night sessions," soliloquized the newcomer. "A cotillion, on occasion, is all right from eight to eleven, but one from eleven to eight knocks me out."

The father sat back in his chair and lighted a prohibited cigar.

"Why not dodge it all, Jack?" he suggested. "Why not dodge it all—the whole racket—and get married?"

"That's just what I think every time I attend one of these dog-watch affairs! Some fine gloomy morning, when I'm taking Clara Brummer home, I'll propose. She'll think I mean it and I'll be asleep. Then I'll be in a deuce of a fix!"

"And why not Clara?" inquired the disciple of buttermilk. "Why not set a new fashion, and have the young woman's father and mother living together? Doesn't she date her pedigree back to Columbus—or is it William Penn? Hasn't old Brummer been successful in not acquiring a newly-rich bank-roll? Seems to me you could commit a worse matrimonial *faux pas*."

The young man's laugh rang joyously throughout the room.

"Old man, you're all right. You're all right, only you're arguing from an angle of forty-five degrees. Clara's a nice girl; personally I haven't a thing against her. It's true she's financially attractive, and has a Knickerbocker beginning and a European finish, but even with all that she's a nice girl. It's not her I balk at; it's what she stands for. Marriage is not for me. You know that. You know I am wedded already. You know I am hopelessly and irretrievably hitched with Art."

For a moment the father's face showed his displeasure.

"You ought to cut out that nonsense, Jack," he cautioned, rising. "No one talks that way but a grand opera prima donna with a couple of husbands on the side. Besides, people in time will believe you."

The laugh which followed—a clear, melodious, infectious laugh—held in it a certain modest finality. Likewise, in the care-free, boyish shake of the head there was resolution. It was obvious that at that moment, at least for a more or less stated time, Jack was sincere. He little imagined that three-quarters of an hour later he was to behold the direct, unstudied, child-like gaze of Hulda Nelson.

Now Hulda is our disillusioning enchantress—queen or vampire, as you will, of this tale. She toiled unashamed. She met Mrs. Werner's demand—fee is what the good lady called it; a reverted, sliding-scale royalty on the first three months' wage—without protest. Accordingly, she was given a small slip of paper, bearing a name and address, and a letter of introduction. Thus equipped, she set out:

Her encounter with Jack was brief and, in its awakening, volcanic. He was passing out the modest second side entrance, used exclusively by the servants. He was on his way to Central Park, where the combined beauty of landscape and freedom of friendly criticism gave scope to his limited abilities and serenity to his artist's soul. Besides, when he produced in a rough sketch a bold, rugged conception of a charming bit of rising ground, subsequent search for the original afforded as much innocent pastime as some people find with picture puzzles. Jack frequently sought the park in solitude, pondering Nature's startling changes.

However, we still have Hulda standing on the sidewalk, hesitantly, by the servants' modest side entrance. She is dressed in black. She holds in one hand the introductory letter and in the other the small slip of paper. Jack emerges from the doorway. She looks at him in a quick, quiet stare of mild, impersonal interest, and extends to him the small slip of paper.—Hold this picture.

In odd and fanciful moments, Jack had proved to himself that he was an artist by picturing an ideal. This ideal was to serve merely as an inspiration, of course; but it was very beautiful and delicately feminine, and contemplation

of it by its creator afforded no little personal satisfaction. It had blue eyes and yellow hair and coloring that was the despair of the painter—and the painted. Hulda Nelson had all these, and she had life. The young man, emerging from the doorway, stared at her in polite and fascinated wonder; the young woman, quietly returning the gaze, spoke first.

"Yust Danners live here, pleas'?" she asked, with slight embarrassment. "Aye ban come for yob."

Jack Tanner bowed. He was ever a gentleman. But he would have told you, had you asked him afterward, that at that moment something within him crashed to the sidewalk with the heavy violence of an armful of lunch-counter crockery. Yet he never turned a hair.

He directed her indoors. He suggested the butler as the proper person for her to interview. Then he went his way.

That day, instead of the park, he boarded a car for the Bronx and sketched an elephant at its noonday repast. Then he changed it to a cartoon, the dubiously political significance of which would have merited his instant discharge from the staff of any metropolitan daily ten years ago. Then he tore it up and came home.

He first sought out the butler.

"Dakin," he said, his voice emotionless and low, "there was a young woman who called here this morning looking for a—some kind of position. She had blue eyes and yellow hair and could look at you in a most solicitous and appealing manner. How about her?"

The butler pondered a moment. "The new help, sir, wot is to assist with the dishes?"

"Assist with the dishes?" repeated Jack.

"Steam 'em, sir."

"Steam 'em!"

There followed a sharp, incisive, inauspicious pause; then the young man exhibited that grave and kindly patience which the ladies who write authoritatively on deportment tell us is the very essence of good breeding.

"Dakin," he said, his voice soft with a note of generous resignation, "you are doubtless unaware that about the worst

thing in the world for a perfect complexion is steam. Doubtless, also, you failed to note the exquisite and delicate smoothness of the young woman's skin. I could search New York and fail to find a more perfect model." A gently reproving hand was laid on the beauty-proof butler's shoulder. "Old man, give her a new job. Take her away from steam and dishes. Let her broaden in something more inspiring—say, dusting the mirrors, or counting the silver—anything—anything light and unnecessary."

Accordingly, Hulda at once found herself elevated to a position of comparative importance in the menial world that robbed the Tanner coffers in royal magnificence. Only on one occasion was she forced to expose the frail texture of her beauty to the ravaging effect of steam. Immediately she was promoted to the position (nominal) of charge of vacuum cleaning and ventilation for the third floor, and her privacy, which she had been told she was to share with another menial, was forced to undergo no such humiliation. She was presented with the key to a room to which she alone enjoyed access. With wide-open arms she was joyously admitted to the leisure set of the below-stairs circle.

It took Jack one week to learn that the superintending of vacuum cleaning and ventilation for the third floor was a position that carried with it no stated office hours. In that period he saw his demure, winsome daughter of the North but twice. On each occasion she merely bowed, respectfully and a little shyly. He realized with some misgiving that he was no nearer than ever to the completion of the lofty ambition of a fame-aspiring youth—putting a Tanner Girl on the front cover of a magazine. He knew he had been losing time. He perceived he must set immediately to work to acquire gradual and non-embarrassing acquaintanceship with the young woman. Into immediate play he must bring strategy, or coincidence—of the long arm—even, in a pinch, mild, gracious, straightforward talk.

It was Meggs, the second man, who fell a victim to the first count; and it was breakfast-table strategy.

"Old man," said Jack one morning, carelessly addressing his father and eyeing with mild concern the butler and second man, who stood some little distance away in solemn conference over the serving of a soft-boiled egg, "I have noted of late that I fail to relish my food these mornings. Such a condition is altogether foreign to my nature and digestive abilities. I have tried everything, from reading George Ade at night to taking twenty breaths of fresh air in the morning. I find I have wasted time."

The father was engaged in the excavation of a grape fruit. He looked up.

"I am a person not given to worry, yet I confess myself as being—or rather, as having been—mildly disturbed. I pondered the matter deeply. Five minutes ago the whole thing came to me with the clarity and suddenness of a hunch to a shoe-string gambler." Jack waved his hand carelessly toward the two solemn serving-men. "These two stone-faced chaps depress me. They chill my artist's soul. And an artist's soul, I find, maintains a close connection with an artist's stomach."

The father, listening, returned to his grape fruit with depressing alacrity. "Chase 'em?" he said.

The younger man smiled. "Hardly that," he demurred. "Dakin, of course, is an institution, but in Meggs' case, why not, say, substitute a young woman? The sunshine and cheer of a pretty face would do wonders for digestion. You yourself might even be able to knock off on buttermilk. Besides, it would be a novelty and an experiment."

Darius Tanner's reply was brief and characteristic. He bade his son go as far as he liked.

Thus for a second time was Hulda shifted in the domestic orbit that guided the reins and purse-strings of the Tanner household. She was removed from third-floor ventilation and installed in first-floor ornamentation. She was instructed in the deft and delicate art of "serving," in the niceties of difference in placing before a diner a consommé and a glass of buttermilk and a confection triumph. All the mysteries of the great waiting-on-table game were taught



"Hulda," he said, "I have decided to make a series of sketches of you. Of course, for that we must have some clothes. . . . A riding habit, walking suit, girlish frock, reception gown



and something smashing in low-neck. Pleased?" "Yes sir," answered Hulda meekly. "Oh, don't talk like that! Honestly, aren't you delighted?" "Yes, sir," answered Hulda, as before.

to her. And groomed and toned down till it rivaled the sibilant caress of a Baltimore bud was the liquid and perfect enunciation with which she invested her working vocabulary—"Yes, sir,"—"I shall see, sir,"—and, "No, sir."

It was the second morning of the serving-maid innovation that Darius Tanner cast a sharp and provincially profound stare at the ravishing novice. He waited till the young woman had left the room.

"By the way, Jack," he casually inquired, "how's the indigestion?"

The young man met this with his most appreciative and glowing smile. "What do you think of her?" he asked.

"Looks all right. Where does she lead the Seashore Girls?"

"Clean miss, old man," said the young man. "Hulda could no more lead a stage chorus than you. She is a fresh-from-the-soil product, and if she had anything to lead it would be a lamb which could understand Swedish. I ran across her as she was coming here looking for a position. She struck me immediately by her rare type of beauty—her freshness, simplicity, unconsciousness of pose. She has been here two weeks and I was thinking—her eyes and coloring and general get-up—I was thinking as a model—"

"As a model?" gently emphasized the older man.

The young man laughed heartily. "Head and shoulders," he said. "Head and shoulders, of course!"

It is now perfectly evident to the experienced reader that within two weeks Hulda was posing in the immense, luxurious front room on the fourth floor, which Jack maintained as a studio. As she possessed double the ordinary model's beauty, she was given double the ordinary model's wage.

A "head" was first essayed, and it progressed delightfully. When completed, the work proved so mediocally done that even the artist himself was pleased and surprised. He determined to forego the pleasure of exhibiting it to friends. He had not failed to note the friendly interest oftentimes taken in the model, quite apart from the picture.

"Hulda," he said one day, "we have

got along so famously that I have decided to make a series of sketches of you. Of course, for that we must have some clothes, and so my tailor has agreed to send up to-day from *Madame de Somebody's* a woman to measure you up for an outfit. A riding habit, walking suit, girlish frock, reception gown and something smashing in a low-neck effect. What do you say? Pleased?"

"Yes, sir," answered Hulda, meekly.

"Oh, don't talk like that! Show an interest. Honestly, now, aren't you delighted at the prospect of wearing some bang-up clothes?"

"Yes, sir," answered Hulda, as before.

After she had gone Jack spent five profound and deeply distressed minutes. What could interest this girl? The splendor and opulence of her surroundings impressed her with about as much concern as an East Indian potentate would have shown in viewing a common or European throne-room. The marvelous and exceptional favor shown her evoked from her scarcely the recognition afforded a Broadway half-dollar tip. Yet in personal conduct and demeanor she was the personification of gracious humility, acceding to the slightest request without murmur.

Within three days the clothes, specially delivered and specially priced, arrived, together with a maid who was to observe that they possessed the proper "cling." Jack's first adventure into the series sketches was to be "The Riding Girl." He told Hulda at breakfast, wherein she still modestly participated, that a maid would dress her; meanwhile he would be getting in readiness his paraphernalia up in the studio.

Three-quarters of an hour later, gloved, booted, and with a delightful air of self-consciousness, Hulda strode mannishly into the room. Jack was working with a paint tube and palette. He laid both down very slowly.

He spoke very little that day. Toward the close of an hour's posing, he said rather hesitantly:

"Hulda, I am going to ask you a favor and I don't want you to take offense. I have read somewhere—'Correct English Taught in Twenty Lessons,'

Of course that's all rot, but we are going to give that fakir a whirl. An ancient Roman senator—or maybe it was a Greek playwright—once observed something in this wise: "'Tis a poor workman who can't fashion a finished product out of perfect material.'"

"Yes, sir," answered Hulda, meekly.

A "professor" was at once engaged and conquest of the English language begun. The "professor" controlled a system unique in its simplicity. All one had to do was to pronounce one's words correctly. The first lesson specialized in confusing the student, and was made up of a number of alliterative words to be syllabified, jumbled, memorized and pronounced with unerring distinctness. For instance—*bondage, bombast; bigamy, brigandage; bassoon, bassinet*, etc., etc. At the end of the first lesson the "professor" put in a call for a two-a-day rehearsal.

Three weeks found Jack's series well under way. "The Riding Girl" had been finished and was already dismounted. "The Walking Girl," nearing the end of an arduous siege, needed only a final retouching to push her over the line. "The College Girl" was already in the first semester of her freshman glory. Only "The Society Girl" waxed indifferent to be taken up. (Parenthetically, Hulda was on her thirty-seventh lesson.)

It was at the breakfast table, where Jack was in the habit of stealing each morning a course lead on his father, that details of "The Society Girl's" *début* were being discussed. Hulda was listening with shy and respectful attention:

"Now this," explained Jack, in his most college-bred manner, "is to be the punch of the lot. This is for the critics to take me seriously. I want you to fix up great this morning and take plenty of time. A maid will dress you and a hairdresser will fix your hair. I want to show my society friends what a real society girl should look like."

It was perhaps the fact that Jack had never before witnessed a young woman dressed for the opera at ten o'clock in the morning that threw his work way out of plumb that day. Never did he experi-

ence less energy, less enthusiasm, and his drawing suffered accordingly.

That evening he pondered deeply. He pondered many things—principal among which was the question of the eternal feminine. He wondered if he was to be ground, a hopeless and disinherited victim, 'twixt the iron jaws of the great god whom he had scorned. He wondered if the deserving and inevitable punishment meted out to the flippant scoffer was to be his. He now realized he was face to face with a problem huge, dire, grotesque, unbelievable. In precipitate flight alone lay safety.

The next day at breakfast he was both sociological and talkative.

"Old man," he began, with strangely disquieting earnestness, "this talk of class distinction—what does it mean? Is there any truth in it? Isn't it, taking it by and large, all pure rot? I know we have people who regard honest labor as a disgrace, but aren't they either 'descendants' or parasites—and generally both? I hobnob and lend money to brokers, bankers, yacht owners and polo players, but I have more respect for a captain of a tug-boat. And it's ten to one the captain would pay me back!"

Darius Tanner was contemplating a column of figures he had set down with careful exactitude on the tablecloth. "Politics isn't worth it, Jack," he said.

"Oh, the—the dickens with politics! And it's the same way with women." Darius Tanner looked up—looked around—and observed that Hulda was missing. "I have always been proud of the fact that, in her small way, before my mother married you, she was an actress. An actress, however small, is a worker. In any line of endeavor—actress, milliner, even scrub-woman—"

"Excuse me, Jack! How're the pictures coming along?"

"Oh, they're—they're so-so."

"I'll have to look them over."

Once his course lay clear before him, Darius Tanner lost no time devising flank movements. He called up a certain grizzled veteran of police—a captain now—and told him he was desirous of securing his son's immediate absence for about a half-hour or so. The golden



"I want to show my friends what a real society girl is like," Jack had said. But perhaps it was the fact that he never before witnessed a young woman dressed for the opera at ten o'clock



in the morning that threw his work way out of plumb. Never did he experience less energy, less enthusiasm, and his drawing suffered accordingly.

captain hemmed, hawed, caughed, and finally replied, "Leave it to me."

Fifteen minutes later, as Jack was in the first flush of his morning's work, he received a telephone-call from a distant police-station, stating that a prisoner had given his name as that of a person who would willingly vouch for his character. The man, charged with a minor offense, claimed to be a former employee, and suspension of sentence could only be acquired by Jack's immediate presence, identifying the man as the person he claimed to be and corroborating his story. Jack swore at himself for ever employing anyone, and agreed to go.

He had left the house scarcely two minutes when Darius Tanner started for the fourth floor. He avoided the house elevator and climbed the three flights of stairs. His respiration, as he neared the top, was somewhat above normal. His respiration, as he entered the studio, jumped to a height or descended to a level where inhalation was but a gurgle and a gasp.

Hulda was gowned as "The Society Girl." She was quietly inspecting Jack's work and her profile was toward the door. Darius Tanner had never witnessed so perfect a being.

He coughed, cleared his throat and recovered his breath.

"Er—excuse me," he said, "I am a person who speaks from the shoulder. Of course, you have no intention of marrying my son."

"Oh, no, sir," answered Hulda, meekly.

The mighty money-king fixed her with his implacable eye. "Good—very good!" he said. "I can see you are a capable young woman. I can see you are a sensible young woman—and attribute the special favor shown you to no ties of affection, but—er—in an indirect way, to your—er—admissible—er—um—ah—adequate beauty."

"Thank you, sir," answered Hulda.

"I'm not giving any compliments, but you can take things any way you like. I'm up here on a mission. Young men often commit rash acts which they as often regret. The laws of our social system are inviolable; the person who

breaks them is forever an outcast. Now, you can appreciate Jack's position. Youth, wealth, social standing, talent—you can understand the kind of person he ought to marry. And, of course, you have no desire to stand in his way?"

"Oh, no, sir," answered Hulda, still meekly.

"I knew you were that kind of a young woman. I knew once the matter was laid clear before you, you would see the thing in the proper light. But, of course, Jack—" Darius Tanner paused and his eyes rested interestedly on the young woman before him. He surveyed her with curiosity and appraisement. He noted for the first time, distinctly, the slim lines of her figure, the quiet grace of her pose, the delicate arch of her neck. "That's quite a gown you've got on," he said.

Hulda bowed her head.

"Jack bought it, of course; but he at least showed good taste. You look rather"—his critical gaze sought her again—"you don't look very much like the person I've been used to seeing. And your—er—your conversation seems to have improved."

"The professor, sir."

"The professor?"

Hulda repeated slowly: "*Bond-age, bom-bast; big-amy, brig-and-age; bas-soon, bas-sin-et.*"

Darius Tanner listened, and the words seemed to envelop him in a hypnotic daze. He vaguely realized that she was repeating some code message, the key to which he did not hold, but he suddenly felt not the slightest desire to ascertain the true meaning. He seemed suddenly to be carried away, entranced and enslaved in the rare narcotic of this wonderful creature's radiant presence. He put his hand to his head. Then he remembered Jack.

"Jack, of course, is a tough proposition when it comes to argument. Personally, I don't care whom he marries. I was thinking of it only from his point of view. He has a long life before him and people take pleasure in throwing it into beginners. You and he would be insulted right and left, Hulda. I would like to spare you this. I know

the way of the socially elect. And although at first Jack would profess he didn't care, after a while he would feel it, Hulda."

"Yes, sir," answered Hulda, meekly.

"Now, in my case," went on Darius Tanner, "I could marry the divorced wife of a Subway guard and people would be falling over themselves to meet her. That's the only kind of marriage I would be expected to make. And how would she be received?—like a princess! But besides you and me, there's Jack to consider."

At this juncture Hulda showed undeniable experience. "I am married, sir," she said.

"Married!" The end of the world is a little thing in comparison to some of the shocks we receive during our lives. Darius Tanner's lips could scarcely frame the word: "*Jack!*"

"Olaf Nelson," said Hulda.

Then a laugh—the joyous outburst of a fearful suspense—broke a little unsteadily over the room.

"Hulda, I thought for a moment you meant something serious. That was an awful scare. I don't know, but it seems hardly likely that I can secure for you a divorce within forty-eight hours."

Then did Hulda place a final and double-riveted clamp on the matrimonial lid. She slowly shook her head.

"Olaf is a sailorman, sir, who—as he say—signs for schooners across bars. He refused to support me and I had to go to work, sir. But when I said I would get a divorce, he say, 'No, Hulda.' He say he would tell of Nels Olson—my first husband, sir; him I forgot to divorce out in Minnesota—and he say he would have me arrested—he say he would have me arrested—for—for—big—brig—brig-and-age," said Hulda Nelson.



Tomaso and the Whale

By

MARY IMLAY TAYLOR

Author of "Caleb Trench," etc.

Illustrated by B. CORY KILVERT

MARIANNA lighted her candle and set it on the narrow window-sill, shading it tenderly with a thin little brown hand, until the flame caught steadily on the new wick.

Tomaso and Dino, her younger brothers, watched the performance with an interest that was not untinted with awe.

"Marianna," said Tomaso solemnly,

"do you s'pose our fathaire could see thad light if he was all the ways inside a whay-al?"

Marianna continued to steady her candle. The inverted half turnip, of which she had made a candle-stick, was not cut straight on the bottom, and it wobbled.

"Our fathaire is nod inside a whale," she replied scornfully. "He is at present

on a treasure island out there," and she pointed toward the distant blue line of New Haven Bay.

The two little boys drew nearer, peering under her elbow at the river below their attic. The dusk of a summer evening was falling fast, the naked spars of an oyster schooner loomed against the rose of the western sky; there were rosy streaks and pearly tints in the white, still water, for it was low tide; and the scent of sea salt was mingled with the reek of oyster shells and dead star-fish.

"Wanta see him in a whay-al!" sobbed Dino, abruptly disconsolate, "wanta a whay-al!"

"Our fathaire is nod in a whale," said Marianna, firmly. "Teecha, she said it was a man in the Bible thad was in a whale; I asked her. Our fathaire is nod in Teecha's Bible; he is Catholeek."

"Marianna," said Tomaso, obstinately, "if our fathaire does nod come back he mus' be in a whay-al."

His sister reflected, her dreamy dark eyes dwelling fondly on the narrow little river, with its dingy embankments, its coal-yards and its naked spars.

"I wish," she said, with a little pathetic quaver, "I wish thad our fathaire would then come out of thad whale, for the *farinata* has got little wiggles in it, and there is only four centeses left."

"It is now a long time sinze our fathaire went away on thad oyster boat," persisted Tomaso.

Marianna nodded, counting on her fingers. "It is thirteen days," she said;

"he is gone to a treasure island where there was left once bags and bags of money and lollypops and *farinata* and hoky-poky and—and bananas."

"Gee whizza!" said Tomaso, longingly. Then he added thoughtfully: "Marianna, th' hoky-poky would've melted!"

"Nod on thad nize treasure land," said Marianna, calmly. "On thad land hoky-poky stays froze and bananas don't getta black spots; that land it has got enchanted."

At that moment they heard the groaning shriek of a passing motor.

"Thad is our fathaire in thad whay-al," said Tomaso, with conviction; "thad whay-al, he thinks he have a green apple—same like Dino had."

Marianna ran to the window and framed the candle flame in the two hollows of her hands.

"I wanta thad he see this light," she said softly, whispering to the candle. "I wanta thad he know where to come in the dark."

"Is he a-comin'?" asked Tomaso, eagerly; "I wanta see the whay-al."

His sister hung out of the window, peering downward, until all her brown curls fell over her face like a veil.

"No," she said, "he is on the island; when he sees our light he will know we watch. He will arrive below."

But Tomaso was of a fixed opinion. "If he is nod in thad whay-al he will come to-nighd," he said; "me—I know he is in a whay-al."

Marianna cut short these vagaries; she went to the shelf and took down a hard half loaf of bread from the Italian bakery on Grand Avenue; dividing it



"Our fathaire is nod inside a whale; he is at present on a treasure island out there"

into three pieces, she gave a piece to each boy, keeping the smallest for herself. While they munched the dry crusts, seated together on the floor, she told them the thrilling story of the treasure island as she had heard it from her American schoolmates.

"A long, long time ago," she began, clasping her hands around her knees and gazing at the candle that shone like a star in the window, "a verra long time ago, a pirate *signore* came to thees island; he had a knife, a verra long knife, in his boot, and a feather righd in his hat—"

"Why had he a feather in his hat?" demanded Tomaso. "*Signores* do nod wear feathers."

"Pirate *signores* do," said Marianna, nodding authoritatively. "Always you know a pirate *signore* by thad feather in his hat. He came to thees island and he digged a hole and he put a whole barrel of pennies—*centesimi*—in it, and he sailed away an' got married or—or he got hanged. I don' know which; I disremember; anyways he never-r, never-r-r comed back for thad barrel, and it is there—if you digs you will get it."

"Wanta *centesimo*!" wailed Dino.

"I told our fathaire," continued Marianna, "and he said thad he'd go ad once and dig up thees whole island; he is there now."

"He is nod there," said Tomaso, belligerently. "He is in a whay-al. I heard of thees whay-al. He lives in the water and he swallowed a *signore*, called Jonasio—he swallows *signores* whole and keeps 'em alive in his stomach. Only if we catcha thad whay-al we will get our fathaire."

Marianna rose; she was indignant. "Our fathaire will

come with thees island in a boat. There aint any whales in the Quinnipick. You go to bed, Tomaso!"

As she spoke, she removed Tomaso's necktie, the only article of clothing she considered superfluous for bedtime, and, shorn of this decoration, he went meekly into his corner with Dino. But, once there, he thrust out his tongue at his monitress.

"There is whay-als," he declared; "there is whay-als, and there aint no island—so there!"

Marianna turned coldly away, but she was herself a little uncertain. After all, her father ought to have dug up an island in much less time. He was good at digging, she reflected, and an island ought to come up almost as easily as a little-neck clam, if you got your spade underneath it. But it was two weeks since their father had gone to his work on the oyster boat. He had never returned, and when the anxious children went to the wharf to seek him they found that the schooner had gone and no one heeded their frantic inquiries.

For thirteen days Marianna, like a little mother, had fed the two boys with a constantly diminishing store of money; and now she was facing the stark necessity of providing food without it. Tomaso's theory was taking hold of her imagination. She had tried to buoy herself up with her dreams of a treasure island, but they faded before the horrid realism of Tomaso's whale.

Long after the two boys had fallen asleep in the corner, curled up like fat puppies on some old bedding, Marianna meditated, with a queer little pucker between her straight black brows. It is necessary to eat and to drink, and in this strange land of America one



"A whale is a grad beeg fish!
A whale would eat Dino!"

can do neither of these things without money. Once she got up and peeped into her father's old violin case, but she abandoned the thought of playing for a living, for the violin was too big for her to handle. Worn out at last with an insolvable problem, she fell asleep, to dream of treasure islands with endless barrels of food.

Once in the night she awoke and the room was quite dark; her candle had sputtered out in the turnip, and the anxious little watcher crept to the window and peeped out. It was still; here and there a red light flared across the black waters, and far off at the horizon wavered the white flashes of a distant searchlight. She listened; the water lapped gently below, but there was no sign of a treasure boat; she crept back disconsolate and curled herself up beside her sleeping brothers. After all, Tomaso must be right about the whale. Something had evidently swallowed up their father alive.

A fresh disappointment in the morning quenched Marianna's last hope. She heard the flap of a sail and looking out saw only old Guido, the Neapolitan, taking out a boat load of shells, while Dino began to cry for food. Marianna tried to boil some *farinata* with the wiggles still in it, but Tomaso got down his father's fishing-rod and line.

"Me—I catcha whay-als," he said solemnly. "There aint no pirate *signores* an' there aint no islands."

Marianna reddened. "There is pirate *signores*," she said, "but mebbe—mebbe there is whales."

"Our fathaire, he is in a whay-al," replied Tomaso, firmly; "and me—I will catcha thad whay-al, cut heem open, and let out our fathaire."

Marianna drew a long breath of awe. After all, Tomaso would be a great man, he was so brave, and she gave him what was left of the wiggly, burnt *farinata*, and went breakfastless herself.

"Where will you catcha thad whale?" she asked meekly, as they descended the creaking attic steps together.

They were the only occupants of a broken old shack by the river, the tenants of the lower floor having vacated it

three weeks before, when the water came into their kitchen.

"Ad the bridge," replied Tomaso. "You bringa the dandelion knife."

Marianna palpitated. "Whad for?"

"To cut heem open," said Tomaso.

"To cut heem open," echoed Dino, gurgling happily.

Then the little procession, led by the blood-thirsty Tomaso, proceeded slowly to the bridge. In the morning sunshine, whales seemed as probable as treasure ships, and the soft blue sky was full of promise. It was low tide again and some old men were peacefully digging ill-smelling clams from the naphtha-drenched mud by the motor-boat house, while a few cows stood knee-deep in the salt marsh. The children climbed down from the bridge to the shore and Tomaso seated himself on an old brick wall and slowly paid out his line. As he did it, a flock of pigeons rose happily from the sand and Dino crowed.

"Hush!" whispered Marianna, laying her finger on his lips; "you will scare thad whale with our fathaire inside him, and he will swim away to the sea, the grad beeg blue sea!"

Tomaso puckered in his own lips, frowned heavily, and paid out more line. Finally it floated peacefully amid the sea-weed and scum at the edge. There was a long interval of silence.

At last Marianna, trembling with excitement, made a trumpet of her hands.

"Got a bite?" she whispered.

"Nope," replied Tomaso; "I guess whay-als don't bite. They gulps it in."

Marianna was silent, but her heart throbbed painfully; she shaded her eyes with her thin hand and looked down the river for a treasure boat. But all she saw was the triangular sail of an oyster sloop going out to "set" more shells.

One of the shuckers stopped on the bridge above them and looked down.

"What yer fishin' for, kids?" he called out, "—mud turtles?"

"I'm fishin' for a whay-al," replied Tomaso, solemnly, "a beeg black whay-al."

"Eh?" The man grinned. "Say, you get salt pork. You can't catch no whales without salt pork."

A little boy carrying his lunch-pail leaned over and grinned too.

Simple Simon went a-fishin'
For to catch a whale,
An' all the water that he had
Was in his mother's pail!

he sang.

Tomaso shot a fierce glance at him, and he ducked behind the rail and ran. But Marianna's heart was torn with the conflict of hope and fear.

"Tomaso," she said, "we aint got but four centses and we must get thad salt pork."

But the noon whistle blew and the bells began to ring. Tomaso's head drooped a little; there was nothing on the line; even the worm had slipped off the hook, and Dino was crying for dinner. Marianna untied the knot in the corner of

at noon. They were very sad; the difficulties of catching a whale seemed to preclude the necessity of carrying a dandelion knife with which to dismember him. When the baby was asleep in the corner, Marianna and Tomaso consulted.

"Salt pork is five centses a bit," said Marianna, "—twenty-five *centesimi*, and we have nod one *centesimo*."

Tomaso had aged prematurely; one bun has remarkably small staying powers when taken on an empty stomach.

"We must catcha thad whay-al," he persisted. "Our fathaire is in thad whay-al."

Marianna looked dreamily out of the little attic window. Her heart still



"Our fathaire will not lika us to sell thees violin," she said. "If we do nod get salt pork, he will stay inside the whay-al," replied Tomaso

her apron and took out her four remaining pennies.

"Buns is five *centesimi* apiece," she said; "I can getta four, but we have nod then salt pork."

"Me hungry!" wailed Dino, clinging to her.

The little mother-sister looked painfully at Tomaso; he nodded, and she rose and led Dino to the bake-shop. The three trudged home at nightfall with only three buns, Dino having eaten one

longed for the enchanted island.

"We must getta our fathaire," she admitted simply. "All will be righd then."

They sat on the floor in silence. Pickled pork had become a luxury. Tomaso's chin wobbled a little but, being a man, he winked back the tears.

"We will sell the violin," Marianna decided gravely.

Her brother's face relaxed. "An' meb-be there'll be enough for a bun, too," he suggested.

She sighed.

Afterwards, when he was asleep, Marianna lighted her last candle and put it on the window-sill. She knelt beside it, shading it in the hollow of her hand and whispering to it.

"Dear candle, mos' nize candle, burn high, burn well, burn grad beeg light," she coaxed; "burn, candle of my heart, thad my fathaire may see thee and come again."

She did not sleep. She lay watching the candle until it danced before her drowsy eyes, and when it finally burned down and went out, the pale stars shone in upon the wakeful child. She was very hungry, but she turned her face on her thin little arm and was silent until Dino awoke to demand food.

She gathered him close in her arms. "Hush," she whispered, "to-day we will getta our fathaire again; do not cry, *caro mio*—you will scare away thad beeg whale."

Dino hushed his high notes, but he continued to whimper until she found the last bit of sugar and gave it to him to suck. Then, without breakfast, the two elder children took up the big old violin case and went out together, carrying it, Dino toddling disconsolately behind them.

They trudged patiently along, though the violin case was heavy. Once Marianna had misgivings.

"Our fathaire will nod lika us to sell thees," she said. "He lika well thad violin."

"If we do nod getta salt pork," replied Tomaso, "he will stay inside the whay-al."

This argument was unanswerable, and they continued on their way. At the bake-shop window Dino interrupted them with loud complaints, but finally they drew near the little shop of a second-handier—a strange little shop that showed a wonderful medley in its narrow show window; there were coral beads, old shoes, a hat that might well

have graced a pirate *signore*, a bundle of arrows, and a stuffed rabbit. Dino hung there, gazing at the amazing treasures, while Marianna and Tomaso painfully and carefully carried in the violin case and set it down on the floor.

Marianna looked up with awe at the long gray beard and gold-rimmed spectacles of the second-handier, but she courtesied prettily, while little Tomaso propped up the black case, his round black head just appearing over the top of it.

"*Signore*," said the little spokeswoman, timidly, "we would to sell our violin."

The old Italian leaned his elbows on the counter and looked over his spectacles at the two small figures within and the smaller one without.

"It is not your violin, I think, *carina*," he said grimly, in his native tongue; "where now is your father and your mother?"

Marianna looked up at him with grave sweet eyes. "My mothaire is dead when Dino is born; my fathaire is at present in a whale."

The second-handier puckered his big brows. "In a whale?" he repeated gravely.

Tomaso peered around the neck of the violin case. "Our fathaire shucks oysters, *signore*," he explained, "and he goes to the boat and he comes nod again, so we know thad bad whay-al has swallowed our fathaire."

"We desire to sella the violin to getta salt pork for thad whale," added Marianna.

The second-handier stretched out a lean hand and took the violin case from the struggling Tomaso. He opened it and looked at the old instrument.

"Id is the violin thad plays thad grad music from the Opera. My fathaire, he told us," said Marianna.

But the old man did not heed her; he fingered the violin eagerly. He swept aside his long beard and placing it under



"Our fathaire has been fourteen days in a whay-al"

his chin began to play a few soft notes. At the touch his face paled; he turned the instrument over and gazed at it in wild surprise, his lips trembling.

"Where then did you get this?" he cried at last, turning upon the children; "this that is mine, my violin!"

"Id is the violin of our fathaire," said Marianna, gravely.

The second-hander seized her by the shoulder—he almost shook her. "Thy father?—his name, *carina*, his name?"

Marianna was frightened but she was firm.

"Id is Giacomo," she said; "Giacomo Cusano, the shucker of oysters, thad lifed once ad Naples, in Italy, where I was born; I and nod Tomaso and Dino, who are American *bambini*."

The old Italian laid down the violin; he drew the little girl into his arms. "And thou," he said, tremulously, "thou art Marianna, my granddaughter. *Dio mio*, my son who ran away in anger is not lost, for my son's son is found."

Tomaso gazed at him keenly. "Id is our grandfathaire, Marianna," he said suddenly; "our fathaire said alway that he weared goggles."

This convincing argument carried away their fears. Marianna and Tomaso accepted the old man gladly, but Dino began to cry for food.

Andrea Cusano wiped away his tears. "Is the *bambino* hungry?" He looked sharply at Marianna. "Is it that your father left no food?"

"Our fathaire has been fourteen days in a whay-al," replied Tomaso. "As for us, we do nod eat this day."

The second-hander snatched up the wailing Dino and made the other two come into the kitchen. He had food there, a *brodo* of meat, some Italian bread, a little fresh fish. The children ate eagerly, the old man watching; and once in a while he wiped away a tear.

"Seven years he has been lost to me," he said to himself. "Seven years he wrote no word, and now I find his *bambini*. *Dio mio*! Marianna, tell me of thy father, where went he but now?" he added, leaning on her chair to listen.

Marianna told him.

Tomaso pushed aside a bit of fresh fish. "I do nod desire to eat my fathaire in a whay-al," he said.

Dino began to cry.

The old man sat down and took the crying child upon his knee.

"Hush, *Dino mio*," he said kindly, "we—you and I—will make that whale give back the *Babbo*. *Perbacco*, do I not remember, thirty years ago I held your father so upon my knee and he was as small then as you!"

"Our *Babbo*? Small lika Dino?" Tomaso, eyes widening, suspended a mouthful in mid air to gaze; "my, aint he growed sinze!"

"He is awful tall," said Marianna, "and he's got whiskers, mos' nize and black."

"Yours is sort of weedy," observed Tomaso thoughtfully, "but mebbe you can't help 'em."

"He's our grandfathaire, Tomaso, and you is nod polite," corrected Marianna severely, "as for me—" her lip quivered—"I desire to see my *Babbo*—my fathaire!"

Andrea Cusano took off his spectacles and wiped them carefully. "Your father went to shuck oysters in the morning, you say, and returned not?"

Marianna nodded.

"The whay-al swallowed him," explained Tomaso.

"It may be he is hurt, or sick of the sun, and in the hospital," said old Andrea; "so it may be, who can tell? But you I have. *Perbacco*, I am lucky! This morning I was alone, now I am rich. Together we will find your father, little ones, the *Babbo* will come back, that I know. Did I not hear a *grillo* (grasshopper) on Ascension Thursday? To hear one sing then is luck. We'll find your father!"

Marianna clasped her hands. "Id will be thad he comes from the treasure island!" she cried, with perfect faith.

But Tomaso shouted. "I knows—I knows, my grandfathaire, he means to catch the whay-al—the whay-al of *Signore* Jonasio!"

CUPID *and* A GRAVEYARD

By FRANCES A. LUDWIG

Author of "The Ancient Reason," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY ROBERT A. GRAEF

ISABEL piled the family Bible, the dictionary, and three volumes of the encyclopedia on the bath room window sill, and set the parlor lamp on the pyramid of wisdom thus obtained. With the light at this height, she was able, aided by a hand-glass and the bath room mirror, to inspect minutely the arrangement of her back hair.

Isabel's father had been a man of education. He was dead, else his daughter never would have been the heroine of this story. This interpolation is necessary; it accounts for the dictionary and the encyclopedia. The Bible may be taken for granted—in the humbler walks of life, Christians are more common than scholars.

Satisfied that her braids were symmetrically wreathed and satin-smooth, Isabel laid down the hand-glass and turned to study her reflection face to face. With her soft eyes and the severe arrangement of her hair, she looked like some masquerading, joyous little nun. The silk in the waist she wore had cost just twenty-nine cents a yard—it was pink, set off by little black velvet bows, and no French modiste could have designed for her anything more becoming.

Her black serge skirt had been pressed until it stood out like an umbrella, giving her, with her puffed sleeves, the hour-glass figure considered correct a few seasons ago. Isabel wiggled her toes in

her new patent leather shoes, and smiled contentedly at her reflection. She was seventeen—and beautiful.

A peal of the bell sent her scurrying into her bedroom. She emerged a few minutes later; and as she pinned on her hat, palpitating a little with excitement, the eyes of her escort, Al Bergstrom, whose daylight employment had to do with Barnhardt & Son's express service, rested on her approvingly. He could not know that her nervousness was due entirely to the fact that this was her first "real" dance, and bore not remotely upon his presence; nor that she was thinking, distastefully, of the long ride she must endure in his company. Mr. Bergstrom was no Adonis; he was bow-legged and wore glasses, and it must be admitted that Isabel considered him but a means to an end.

"We're to meet Laurene and Lorenzen at Connery's drug store down-town," said Al, as they plowed their way through a carpet of new fallen snow. "Then we'll pick up Nell on our way out. We have to go right past her place."

"I suppose Billy O'Farrell will be the whole thing," said Isabel, naïvely betraying the end to which Mr. Bergstrom was the means.

"He's the secretary of the club," Al chuckled. "Great club! There's five or six of the fellows in the burg where Billy lives give a dance once a year at Thanksgiving time in Weinert's hall. Then they disband till the next winter.



She was able, aided by a handglass and the bathroom mirror, to inspect minutely the arrangement of her back hair

And Billy's the only Turk in the crowd."

"Where *does* Billy live?"

"'Bout half-way to the state line. You'll think so before you get there. Hollanden's the name of the station."

"I wish Mary Liz was with us," said Isabel.

"She's with her own crowd to-night—the G. C. C.'s," observed Al, carelessly. "This would be hardly her style, anyway."

"She asked me to go with her," said Isabel, suddenly.

"She did!" Bergstrom looked a little surprised. "Well, you ought to have gone. There's *class* to the G. C. C. affairs."

"I'd rather go here."

"You would? Why?"

"Because—" Isabel blushed furiously. "Oh, because, I—didn't have anything swell enough to wear there," she ended, lamely.

Bergstrom construed the blush to his own satisfaction. They were side by side in the car. He moved a little closer to the girl and settled comfortably in his seat.

Isabel edged closer to the frosty window. Was it possible that he thought it was for *him* she had come? For a minute she hated him fiercely. In addition to being seventeen and beautiful, Isabel had her complement of inherent, primitive savagery.

Billy O'Farrell—she could feel the pulse in her throat as he stood looking down at her with gracious condescension—had said: "I'll fix it up with Al to come and get you. I can't myself; I'm on the floor committee and it's out of the question. Al can't help it because he's a comic supplement: he's a good fellow and he'll get you there all safe. I'll do the rest." So she had said that she would come.

Half an hour later, Isabel, Laurene and Nell sat inside the car that was to take them to their final destination, and laughed exceedingly, after the manner of young women too care-free and full of anticipation to be mindful of the proprieties. Their escorts, asserting their privilege as men, stood on the platform and smoked, the while smiling benignly through the car window at the girls.

Nell looked out of the window as they passed a long, white, undulating expanse, and remarked:

"There's 'the Ridge' cemetery now; Weinert's is just beyond."

"End of the line," called the conductor, and the little company made its way toward a lighted building that stood, apparently isolated, a short distance from the car line.

They entered a long, wide hall. The scene, with all its appointments, was new to Isabel, and she looked about her curiously. A railing around each side of the place enclosed a platform on which stood many small tables, grouped with chairs. And at regular intervals along the outer wall, she noticed small white push-buttons.

Billy O'Farrell came, up, beaming. Pinned to one side of his coat, a gold-lettered, blue-satin badge announced his official capacity. The "custom-made" creases in his black suit proclaimed its newness; and to Isabel, accustomed to seeing him in his dingy office coat, he looked as handsome as a god.

"Glad to see you all got here all straight. Let me make you acquainted with Mr. Schneider. He's the most popular man in this ward—next to me. He's going to be our next alderman. He'll introduce you to some of the boys." And Billy was off, welcoming a crowd of newcomers.

Mr. Schneider was a stockily built young man with black hair parted precisely and plastered down so smoothly that his small head resembled an egg plant. His quick eyes rested appreciatively on Isabel, as he ushered the visitors to seats; then he leaned negligently forward and placed his finger on one of the little push buttons.

"What'll it be?" he inquired.

"Milwaukee's fame," said Lorenzen, promptly.

"Make it two," said Bergstrom.

"I'm choked," muttered Laurene to Nell. "I'll take a glass of beer if you will."

Nell had been born and bred in a community where beer was a common, domestic beverage. She merely smiled and nodded.

Isabel stared at her friends in amazement and some alarm. Beer she had never tasted; liquor of any sort was something to be kept with the medicine bottles on one's pantry shelf, and used likewise. She glanced around the room.

"I—never drink beer," she faltered. "Do they—have lemonade?"

The waiter took the orders; the hospitable Mr. Schneider turned his back and busied himself with Nell's dance program. Laurene, with a slight frown, leaned forward and whispered:

"You needn't have been so particular *here*. It isn't as if you didn't know who you're with. These folks will only think you're putting on airs."

Isabel flushed. While Laurene and Nell laughed and chatted with newcomers, she sat silent and miserable. *Had she been silly?* Had she spoiled her evening at the very outset by an exhibition of puritanical squeamishness? No one noticed her. She began to wish she had gone with Marie Elizabeth. Where was Billy O'Farrell? Why had he asked her to come to such a place as this? He ought to have known—

The subject of her thoughts dropped into a chair beside her. He saw the array of glasses on the table and grasped the situation at once. In turn, he pressed the ivory button, duplicating Mr. Schneider's order; then he favored Isabel with a glance that approved her unspoken preference.

Laurene's mouth tightened. "I think I'll have lemonade, too, Billy. You didn't ask me, you know."

"Sure thing." Cheerfully laconic, Billy reversed her order. The compliment he had paid Isabel was very subtle—but he knew what ailed Laurene.

He studied Isabel's program and speculatively stroked his chin. However greatly he might approve of her principles, he had not the slightest notion of becoming a martyr. So he scrawled his initials opposite several round dances, made a hasty apology, and hurried across the room to join a crowd of young men clustered in one spot like flies around a syrup jug.

The hub of this congregation was a young woman with elaborately puffed

blonde hair, and a complexion that might have been improved by vigorous applications of soap and water. She wore a black satin waist and a bedraggled white serge skirt. A bunch of wilted carnations cascaded from her shoulder to her bosom. She laughed and chewed gum at one and the same time, and she was calling the buzzing young men around her by their shortest names. But when she moved, it was with the very poetry of motion; her program was already full.

Isabel observed the delinquent Billy push through the crowd and possess himself of the popular young woman's program. And at that Isabel's mouth twitched scornfully. With sudden recklessness she leaned forward and addressed a gay remark to the near-alderman who was devoting himself to Nell.

The evening passed swiftly. Isabel blundered through the round dances, all unconscious of the suffering endured by the youths who had been guileless enough to select her as a partner. The would-be alderman, charmed by her eager interest in ward politics, (Isabel was learning rapidly) forgot his affront and basely deserted Nell.

When the midnight call came for supper, Isabel was enjoying herself hugely.

Below stairs, a bustling *hausfrau* served cold veal, dill pickles, rye bread and similarly easily digested delicacies—and more beer.

Lorenzen looked at his watch as he rose. "We've got about an hour more, girls. The last car for the limits barn leaves at two. They don't run another till five in the morning."

There was a lull in the festivities. Suburbs keep early hours and many of the dancers were leaving. Coming up the stairs, Billy O'Farrell managed to separate Isabel from the others, and to maneuver her into a shadowed corner.

"First chance I've had to talk to you to-night. Gee, but I'm tired." As he spoke he reached mechanically toward a push button.

Isabel caught hold of his arm. "Billy O'Farrell, if you order any more lemonade—or ginger ale—or *pop*, I'll never speak to you again."

"Why, what's the matter?"

"I've drank a gallon—I know I have. It even makes me sick to look at an empty glass."

"You *are* a little pale." He was slightly concerned. "Sit here, then, and talk to me awhile. Are you having a good time?"

"Oh, fine," she answered, absently.

"Would you like to try that waltz, Isabel?"

She turned to him: "You know I can't waltz much," she faltered, but her eyes betrayed her eagerness.

"We'll take a turn or two and see," said he, generously.

They went once around the room. O'Farrell stopped and wiped his brow with his handkerchief. "Suppose we sit down," he suggested, weakly. "I—I—really, I didn't know I was so tired."

Hurt and angry, Isabel let him take her back to her seat. The music thrilled her, stirred her. The lightly swaying couples seemed to move without effort. She watched them, longingly.

"Billy," she asked, wistfully, "do you suppose I'll ever learn to dance?"

His eyes twinkled. "You might," he admitted, "in about a thousand years."

He really did not mean to hurt her; the expression was an exaggeration common with him, a stretch of fancy that appealed to his Celtic imagination. Isabel's lips quivered and she turned away her face.

"You take Mame over there," said Billy, warming to his subject. "She's as light on her feet as a feather. And look at the size of her! But she's been at it ever since she was in short dresses. I don't know—" He paused and his manner changed. "I don't know as I'd want you to dance as well as she does, Isabel."

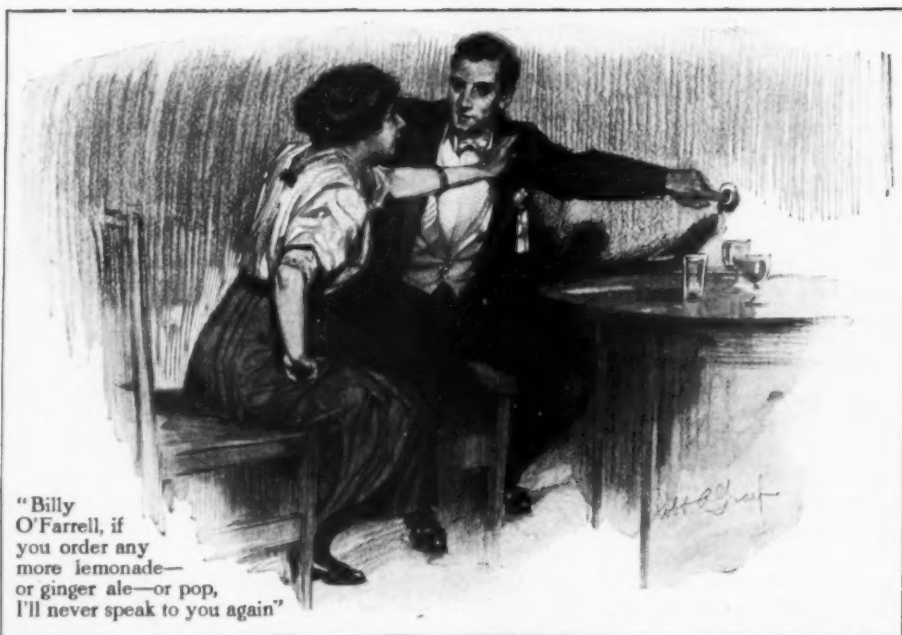
Isabel kept her face averted. Mame, indeed!

Billy picked up her dangling program and glanced over it idly. He stiffened and rose to his feet.

"Why Isabel! You've got this dance with Al Bergstrom. Didn't you know it?"

"Have I?" Isabel's voice was frigid.

"Sure you have. This is a great note.



We'll have to go and square ourselves with Al."

"You can, if you want to. I'd rather stay here."

"Don't be a little mope," coaxed Billy. "I'll tell old Al I asked you over here and you thought his was the next dance. He wont mind."

"You can tell him anything you please," snapped Isabel. "I don't care what you tell him."

Billy was perplexed. It was evident that she didn't realize the enormity of her breach of etiquette.

"See here, Isabel," he said earnestly. "When Al went all the way after you and brought you here, you—you oughtn't to treat him like this, you know. It aint the square thing. You ought to understand—"

Isabel faced him with sparkling eyes. "Really! Well, since you feel so bad about it, perhaps you'd better explain to him just how it was I happened to *come* way out here."

Communing silently with himself, O'Farrell strode across the room. Bergstrom sat beside Laurene, glowering and taciturn. That he had served as a means to an end was beginning to trickle

through his none too facile understanding.

Billy was too much engrossed in propitiating him to observe Laurene. But when he addressed a remark to her and she deliberately turned and walked away, he was filled with a sudden premonition. Apprehensively he examined his own program. Yes, it was so: *he* had had that dance with Laurene.

"Well, Holy Cats!" ejaculated Mr. O'Farrell. He leaned against a supporting pillar and helplessly passed his hand across his brow.

Laurene was half-way down the hall. He gathered his wits and hurried after her. "Laurene—I say, Laurene! I'm awfully sorry. I thought it was the next dance—honest to Heaven I did! Please let me square myself. I don't know when I've made such—"

Laurene turned and looked squarely through him, addressing Lorenzen: "I'll tell Nell we're ready to go now. Yes, it's time; we've stayed long enough."

"Laurene," begged Billy, half-heartedly, cursing himself for the blunder. Laurene's temper was notoriously unreliable. "Don't go away—"

"Yes, Nell," Laurene trilled clearly.

"We're going now. I'm getting tired."

A small boy bounced through the door. History does not say why, on that eventful night, he was not in his proper place in bed. He delivered a high-pitched, hysterical yell.

"Fire! Fire! Billy O'Farrell's house is on fire!"

The effect was instantaneous, electrical—abundant. When was it ever otherwise? The director of the orchestra (local musicians) dropped his baton and cleared the stage and a table at one bound, and the pianist reached the door three seconds ahead of the crash of his overturned stool. Swift as they were,

alone in the deserted hall.

Nell peered out of a window. "I don't see any fire. Where does Billy live?"

"Live!" ejaculated Laurene. "How should I know? This place is a wilderness."

They went down to the dining room; even it was deserted. Outside the black night hovered over a white waste of snow. Upstairs the blazing lights and scattered musical instruments gave the place a desolate, tragic air. Isabel shivered.

Laurene's wrath began to bubble. "Of all the nerve!" she exclaimed. "To leave us here and rush off—every soul. I never heard of such a thing! And we're supposed to sit and twirl our fingers till they come back. If I don't teach that Lorenzen something! Come, girls; let's get our wraps and go."

"This time of the night?" wailed Isabel. "Where? How can we? We'd get lost."

Laurene sniffed. "I meant go home. I guess we know the way to the car. If you want to sit here and let them see you haven't any self respect, you can—I've got sense enough to know when I'm insulted. If I don't show that Jim Lorenzen—! Come, let's hurry.

You can stay with me; I'll telephone mother, 'Bel. We've got to pass Nell's anyhow.

Let's see if I've got car-fare."

She untied a knot in a corner of her handkerchief and drew a breath of relief. "Two quarters. We'll get home all right. Never travel without car-fare. I remember one

Billy was before them. Stopping only to call out assurances of a speedy return, Lorenzen and Bergstrom rushed after him; the rest of the company, hastily donning coats and scarfs, soon followed, and the visiting girls were left



"Fire! Fire! Billy O'Farrell's house is on fire!"

time—these your rubbers, Isabel?"

There was a clang, a rumble and a whirr. The tail lights of a receding street-car showed through the darkness.

"The last car!" Isabel's voice was sepulchral. "The last car, Laurene!"

Laurene's eyes filled with tears of angry disappointment. She wiped them away and bobbed her head energetically. "We'll walk. We'll follow the car tracks to the limits barn. It aint so dreadful far. I will *not* have that Jim Lorenzen come back and find me with my hands folded. Do you know they've been gone an hour?"

They started toward the city. To the right was a sharp descent; the car tracks were built on an artificial embankment. To the left—Isabel clutched frantically at Laurene's arm.

"We've got to pass the cemetery, Laurene!"

Laurene hesitated a minute. "Well, what of it? We're in the middle of the street and there's nothing to hurt us. Don't be silly, Isabel."

They pressed forward, however, with nervous haste. Half a block further Nell stopped. "I think *this* is silly," she said, decidedly. "I'm going back."

"I'm not," said Laurene.

Isabel stood between the two, her hands clasped in dismay. "You *can't* go alone. Nell's right, Laurene. We're fools. Come on back."

"What was that?" cried Nell.

They listened. A sound came drifting over the snow, a faint, eerie wail. It came from the direction of the cemetery. Instantly the three girls were together, clutching each other in a panic of fright.

Again came the sound.

"It's a c-c-cat," chattered Laurene.

"It's no, c-c-cat," contradicted Isabel.

Nell dropped on her knees; the beads of the rosary which she carried in her pocket slipped through her fingers and her lips moved softly.

"L-let's run," breathed Laurene. But she and Isabel clung together, their limbs weighted by fright.

The feeble moon slid under a cloud. Again came the wail, louder than be-

fore. It bore a faint resemblance to a familiar word.

"It's a child!" Isabel stopped quaking. "It's a child," she cried.

Nell's eyes were shut, her lips moving in supplication.

"It's a child," repeated Isabel. "Don't you hear? It's crying 'Mamma.'" She pointed to a gap in the cemetery fence. "We'll have to go in there and see."

"Go in t-to the cemetery?" quaked Laurene, in incredulous horror.

Nell opened her eyes. "Go—in—there?" she asked in a palsied whisper.

"It's a child," repeated Isabel.

"Aint you sc-scared, Isabel?" For all her terror, Laurene could still wonder.

Isabel turned her face, drained of all its pretty pink, to her companion.

"Of course, I'm scared. I'm sc-scared sick. But it's a child."

It was nothing to Nell's discredit that her immediate ancestors had made their first and only trip across the Atlantic third-class. Nor was it any reflection on Laurene that her grandfather had altered the last syllable of his family name. But blood is blood—and Isabel's forefathers were New England pioneers.

She shut her teeth upon her lower lip and tremblingly moved toward the gap in the fence. Nell rose to her feet. "She mustn't go alone," she said; and with the courage of desperation, she followed.

Again came the wail; the girls clung together, but this time there was no mistaking it. It was the voice of a child, crying for its mother.

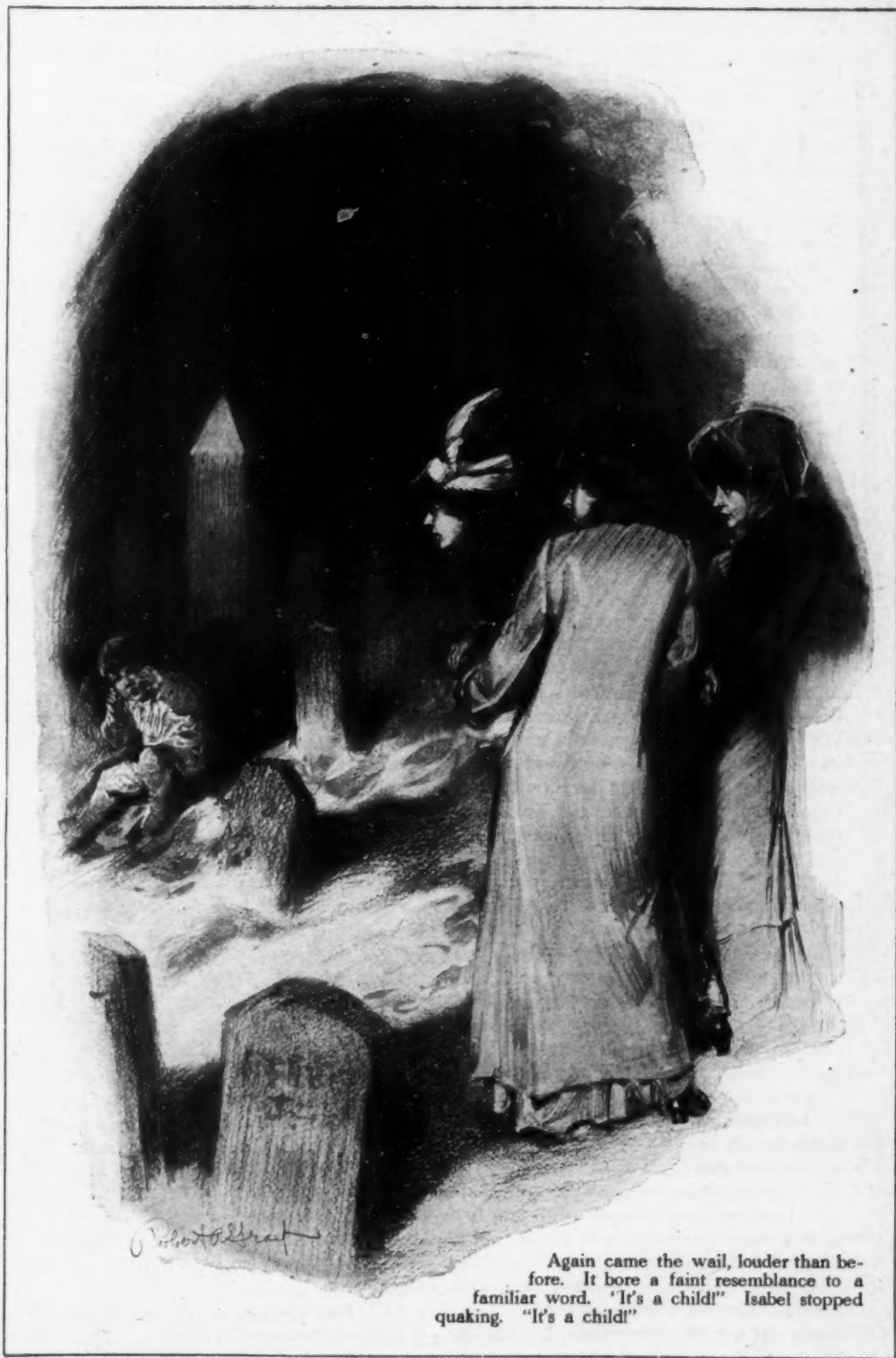
Less fearfully the trio advanced. The cemetery was oblong in shape, about the width of a narrow block—one of those outlying places of burial that an advancing city fills and leaves behind. Midway of it, a little figure in flannel night-drawers sat in a snow bank.

"Well!" gasped Laurene. "Well!" There was absolutely no word in all her expressive vocabulary that would fit.

Nell picked the baby up. Laurene pulled off her coat and wrapped it around him. "Here, let me carry him. Yes, I'm the strongest and I wont need my coat, walking. Where on earth—!"

"He's scared to death," pitied Isabel.

"He's half frozen," said Nell.



Again came the wail, louder than before. It bore a faint resemblance to a familiar word. "It's a child!" Isabel stopped quaking. "It's a child!"

Again they climbed through the gap in the fence. From the direction of the hall, dark figures were coming. Men were running, shouting and swinging lanterns. Presently Lorenzen's voice came to them.

"It's the girls. It's the girls—and they've got him! Hi, Billy, Billy! The girls have got him!"

Hatless, Billy O'Farrell rushed up.

"You got him, Laurene? Thank God! It's little Bill—sister's kid. Where—"

His voice was drowned by a medley of exclamations. Through the din Laurene at last made herself heard.

"Billy O'Farrell, take that child to his mother. Do you want him to die? It was Isabel found him, *Isabel!* Hurry him home. We can talk about it later."

Lorenzen and Bergstrom explained in concert, as again they climbed the stairs to Weinert's hall.

"The fire was nothing—only a shed back of Billy's. Some tramp sleeping there, probably. But when we started back his sister screamed that the kid was gone. He walks in his sleep—and I suppose the racket disturbed him. Bill lives half a block beyond the cemetery. We looked the other way and then started down this side—so we could stop and tell you. The kid must have crawled through the fence and something woke him up. Three cheers for you all!"

"Three cheers for Isabel," corrected Laurene. "Nell and I were scared blue."

"But what were you doing there?" broke in Bergstrom. "Why wasn't you in the hall?"

Laurene blushed. "Why, we—we—"

"We—er—got tired of waiting and thought we'd take a little walk," explained Nell. "Just for a breath of air."

Isabel sat down weakly on the edge of the platform and began to laugh. The tears came; she wiped them away and sobbed and shook alternately.

"Poor kid! I don't wonder she's all in." Laurene crossed over and put her arms around the hysterical heroine, just as Mr. O'Farrell entered with a jubilant step. "Here, Billy, take her and get her some water or something." Laurene smiled at him understandingly.

"It's up to you, anyway." She flung herself into a chair. "Do you suppose any of us will ever see a bed again?"

"You're right; it's time we did. I'll go and 'phone for a cab," said Lorenzen.

O'Farrell half-led, half-carried Isabel the length of the room. She stopped him at the door. "Just get me a drink, Billy, and I'll be all right. Just a drink of water, Billy."

"There's lots of the other stuff here, 'Bel," he said, as he set down the empty glass. "But I guess you don't need it." There was a new note in his voice; his usual air of affable condescension was quite gone. "The sister'll be here in a minute. She wants you to stay the night with us—so she can tell you—all she feels."

Isabel shook her head shyly. "I must go with the others. Ma wouldn't like it, I'm sure. Besides, I want to thank Al—for bringing me."

"It's a mighty good thing he did." Billy pushed her gently into a chair and stood beside her. "But I was thinking to-night," he began, awkwardly, "and I was sorry I'd had you come. I saw you didn't belong—and I was glad you didn't. But now—if it hadn't been for you, little Bill might have been found too late."

"If Laurene hadn't started to walk home, you mean," said Isabel.

"That's all right. There's many a man wouldn't have had your nerve."

"I was afraid, Billy," she whispered. "Dreadfully afraid."

"Yes, but you did it. And that—that's the big part of it. But after this we're going to cut out this sort of thing." He placed his hand over hers and she thrilled at his choice of a pronoun.

"There's places I'm going to take you—bang-up affairs. I can get in—if I try."

She looked up at him wistfully. "But I can't dance. You know—you said—"

"Dance!" exploded Billy O'Farrell. "Dance!" He lifted her hand and pressed it to his cheek.

A gleam of mischief came into his eyes, but his voice was tender as he whispered:

"I'll teach you to dance, little girl, if it takes a thousand years!"

The Piracy of Black Scotty

Lighthouse Tom's story of
a Girl's Rescue Expedition

By FREDERICK R. BECHDOLT

Author of "Lighthouse Tom," "Sealed Orders," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. H. D. KOERNER

THREE blocks away, San Francisco's streets flared with electric signs, and the heels of commuters, ferry-bound, smote the pavements. Here in the saloon of Lighthouse Tom, surrounded by a score of brawny fellows, a chanty-man leaned back against the bar and sang.

The fishing fleet was back in port from Behring Sea; a French bark that had come by way of the Cape of Good Hope and Australia, had added two or three red-capped sailors to the crowd in the room. A pair of half-caste Portuguese boat-steerers had drifted in, their pockets heavy with whaler's money earned during two years in the Arctic.

Big men, these, with hard, resolute faces, with loose shirts open above their chests; some wore sheath knives after the old deep-water custom. The chanty-man was swarthy and lean featured; his head was black; his bronzed throat was bare. His voice was rich and full.

The man was singing "Shenandoah"—a windlass chanty that has the dignity of a hymn. The score about him joined in the chorus; it was like the roll of long surges before a roaring wind. As I listened, thrilled with the wild romance and

the mystery of the sea, which still clings to those places where her rough children play between voyages, Lighthouse Tom came and sat beside me.

"Iron ships to-day," said he, "and wooden men. 'Tis not the crew of bullies that onct was. Lad, ye ort to have heard them twenty year ago."

I told him what was in my thoughts. He chuckled.

"Mystery, ye say; and wild deeds! Is that the name ye give it? Not in that bunch, lad. They're good enough to man a windlass; and, even at that, donkey engines does it fer them now. I've seen the crew in this here room that could of stood their own agin anyone."

He paused to light his pipe.

"And a-w-a-a-y you rolling river," boomed the chorus.

"Ye should of heard Black Scotty sing that." Lighthouse Tom looked down the length of the room. The place was thick with smoke from many pipes; into the murk the light glowed yellow.

"Did ever I tell ye how piracy was hatched in this room? No? It was along of this here Black Scotty. He was built on the same lines as that one that is a-singing to-night, and flew the same col-

ors. Black, he was, black as the ace of spades. Highland Scotch, and had run away to sea. A chanty-man; and in them days that meant something.

"Them was the times of long v'yges; and the wind jammers was thick along the docks—the days of deep-sea boarding houses. Lord love ye, lad, why there was a dozen of them places along this street; and as many near by. Shanghai Brown, Mother Martin, The Bells of Shandon, Dublin Lewis' place, and many others. Them days, it was three months advance—seventy-five dollars—and forty dollars 'blood' for the crimp, as well. Things was roaring then. I've seen a crew shanghaied from one ship to the other without touching a foot on shore. And, when they did land, it was swift work—a bunch of money after six months at sea; a crowd of bullies from Antwerp, Hong Kong or the Lord knows where; and what ye may call a rip roaring time with it all. Then, downed by the drink or mebbe a clout on the head, and wakin' up outside the Gate, like as not awash in the scuppers.

"Now this Black Scotty, he was main fond of raising his share of hell. There was not a port between here and the Straits settlements—going by way of Port Said—but had some reason to remember him. He was as handy at fighting as he was at singing—a good man with his two fists. And he was quick to do a thing. He did not wait to lay out a course. Ye get me? He was one of them that is always a-taking a chanst. And glad to do it. He slipped his cable fer good, lad, in Mozambique, along of a woman and a Lascar and a knife.

"But I was headed fer piracy. Ye see this Black Scotty had punched his way around the world, and he had sung his way around the world, and, for all that he was pretty sure to end the night in a free fight, old shipmates liked him. Ye had to like him; he had that way with him.

"Let me see; let me see; it was all of twenty year ago, that night. The men is many of them dead now, and what of them is left is old like me. And the *Evenin' Star* is a-laying rotting on a mud-bank up on Duwamish River on

Puget Sound. Ah, well; the years goes fast when ye are on the tail end.

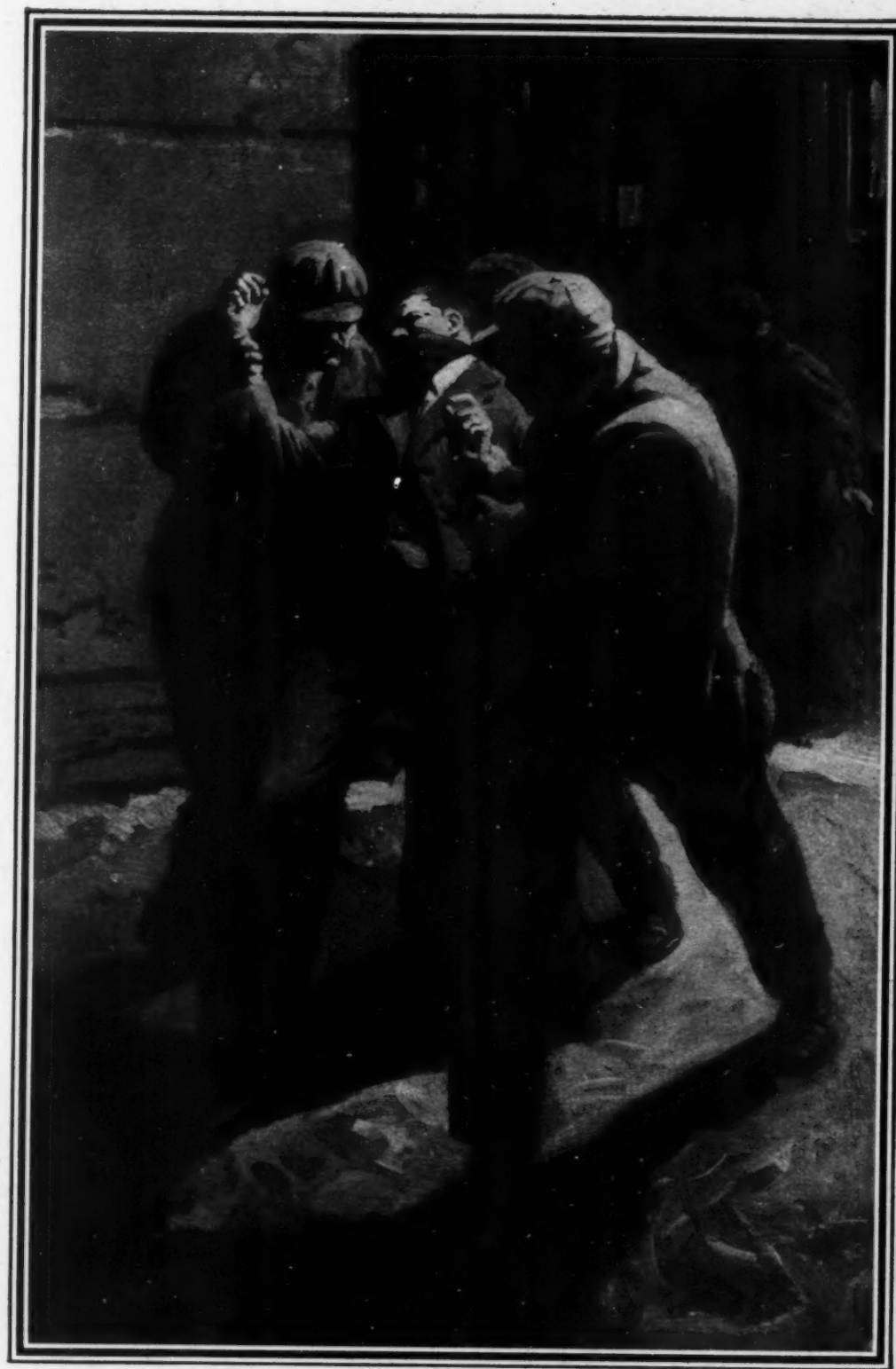
"It was this way, lad: There was a dozen in the room that night—Red Larson, Boots Leary, Manuel, that froze to death in the Arctic, and Olaf Hansen. I mind them being in the bunch. The *Evenin' Star*, she was in port—and she was a-taking on her crew.

"Not that them lads minded the *Evenin' Star*, only to keep clear of the runners; that was all. Fer these was able seamen, and could ship with whom they pleased, so long as they did not get drunk and laid by the heels. The *Evenin' Star* was a blood ship. She had a history, she had. A good, staunch bark; but she had a skipper that was as bad as they make them; and a mate named Jim White; a bucko mate he was. A regular hell ship; and the name of her was a name to curse by. She never could get a crew, only by shanghaing a good three-quarters of them. And this here Jim White, he used to tame them as soon as they got to sea.

"How did he do it? Lad, I have not the time to tell ye the tales that has come from the old *Evenin' Star*. The last v'y'ge of her, one man tried to cut the skipper's throat; and another come a-runnin' aft a-yellin' and throwed himself over the rail and drowned. Rope's end was too easy for Jim White; he used his big fists as a joke, and a belayin' pin was a pleasant argyment fer him to put. So men hated that ship, and, as I said, they had to steal the crew. They'd pay as high as a hundred dollars blood money to the crimps.

"But this crew in my barroom was not a-taking thought of the *Evenin' Star*. We was all snug and ship-shape here; and the boardin' house runner that poked his head in my door—unless he had a name of being fair and above board—would leave the place like a man a-trying fer to fly. So all hands was lying and drinking and what not. Then in comes Black Scotty.

"Many of the bunch had been shipmates to him; and all hands knowed him. So everyone sung out fer him to give us a song, the minute he showed his face. But sing he would not.



"I saw them come out from the dark and leap on top of him"

"He was roaring mad, Black Scotty was. No sooner had he come in than he told us about it, and no sooner had he told us and took a look around fer his man, than he was fer heading out agin. It was this way. He had dropped into the Bells of Shandon, being sober enough to look out fer himself and not caring anyhow, and he had run afoul of a lad in there, a landsman. The two of them had some words. Lord knows what was the trouble. Scotty didn't remember himself. But the talk got hot and Scotty was fer fighting. Then this lad called him a liar. And it seems like as soon as Scotty got his hands up, the other feller seemed to be struck all in a heap. He just give Scotty a look and whipped around a-making fer the door with all sail on and a fair wind.

" 'Not like he was scared either,' says Scotty; 'that's what made me mad. He was a good chunk of a lad and ready enough fer trouble. But something come over him like, and he up and 'bout ship, and out to the street. I've been a-looking fer him ever sence. A liar, he called me, and no man gets away with that.

"Well, as I said, he was fer looking further; but some of the lads as was his shipmates on the last v'y'ge got him to stop and have a drink; and then he had another.

" 'What manner of man was this?' says Red Larson.

" 'Bigger than me,' says Black Scotty, 'and jist a lad at that. A landsman, he was; and there was Irish in him. I will pull that red head of his off of his shoulders when I fetch up with him.'

" 'Belay there!' sings out Olaf Hansen; and Black Scotty stopped talking just like I am a-telling you, lad. He stopped with his mouth open, and one fist up in the air. And all of us stood fast and no man said a word.

"Fer the door had opened and a girl was there right amongst us, in the middle of the floor.

"Bareheaded she was, and her hair all ways in the wind that was a-blowing outside. Her face was as white as paper, and her big black eyes was a-blazing like beacons on a clear night. She had throwed herself into the door like some

one was arter her; and now she come running towards me. And it took the second look—she was that changed with fright and with the marks of the tears on her cheeks—before I knowed her. 'Twas Nellie Morgan, that lived with her mother next door to the missus and me on Rincon Hill.

" 'Oh, help me, Lighthouse Tom,' was the hail she give me.

"Well, lad, what with them distress signals she was a-flying, and what with her coming in on us so sudden, right in the middle of Black Scotty's rough talk that way, I was all struck in a heap. I mind now how it come to me that something might have happened to the missus or the babies. That is the way of a family man. But I made shift to ask her what was wrong.

" 'Larry,' says she, 'they nearly killed him. Right before my eyes. And he doing what he could to fight them off.' She sort of choked and reached out fer to hold herself up by the bar. And then I come back to my senses and, 'Give her a hand,' says I to Black Scotty, for he was hard by where she stood. He made shift to stiddy her or she'd have fallen to the floor. And I come out from behind the bar with some liquor; but she was strong agin before I come up alongside of her. And now her lips was tight and she talked like a mate a-giving orders, hard and fast.

" 'Listen,' says she. 'I must tell ye; and ye must help me quick. I tried to find a policeman, and could not; and if I had it would of been no good. Larry is shanghaied. Right in front of my eyes they dragged him off, and not this half hour gone. I come here to you, Lighthouse Tom. I knowed ye could help me.'

" 'Shanghaied?' says I, and I could not believe the words. For this Larry was as handy a lad as ever was raised south of Market—a big young lad; and had been a teamster for three year now. He knowed the city front from Meigs Wharf to India Basin. Ye see, lad, he had been courting Nellie Morgan this long time now. Me and the missus knowed them both. A bit of a rowdy he had been, but he had stiddied down.

"'Shanghaied,' says she. 'At first I thought 'twas thieves. But I saw more, and then I knew.'

"'Tell me, lass,' says I.

"'And oh,' says she, 'it was all through fault of mine. We two was to go out to-night to the Chutes. And Larry would have it that I come uptown to meet him. Always he had come after me; but to-night he got off late from work. So we was to meet up on Third Street and take the car. I went there and I waited for him. And he was late.

"'It was that made the trouble. I did not like it. Ye mind how Larry used to drink a bit too much at first, and now he does not because of my asking him. And I was afraid it might be that was keeping him—afraid he had mixed up with some of the boys. And when he did come, I smelled the liquor on his breath. It was not that so much—I had not made him stop it altogether—but I was angry-like from the waiting. And one word brought on another. We quarreled. And I told him to go away from me. He started back down Folsom Street towards the city front and I started for home.

"'But I had only gone a little ways when I felt my heart grow so heavy inside of me that I could stand it no longer. I turned back and tried to catch up with Larry. I hurried down Folsom Street. He was way ahead of me. I saw him and I almost ran.

"'Down near Stewart Street he was passing an alleyway; and I was not far behind him; and then it happened. I saw them come out from the dark and leap on top of him; and I heard them strike him. And at first I thought it would be robbers, and I was running towards them—for why, I do not know—and I screamed. And then they dragged him away. And I was clost enough now to hear their voices and the words they said; and I knew from the talk that they were seafaring men. A half a dozen of them; and one that give them orders—a great hulk of a man with a long black mustache.

"'Jim White,' sings out Black Scotty. 'Mates, the lad is shanghaied fer the *Evenin' Star*.'

Nellie, she went on.

"'I run into the alley after them. It was all dark; and when I had gone a ways and they was far ahead, I grew afraid. Then I ran back and tried to find an officer. There was none. I knew now that these would be runners and a crimp's gang; and I thought of you, Lighthouse Tom.'

"And then Black Scotty spoke agin. Says he: 'The *Evenin' Star* sails with the morning tide. And that big man is Jim White.'

"I felt something like a shiver a-going up my back, for I knowed he had spoken the truth. And I knowed that by this minute Larry would be laid hard and fast in the fo'castle of that blood-ship.

"And Red Larson was a-saying something to Olaf Hansen, and in it I heard him cursing quiet like. And Manuel piped up: 'A hundred dollars blood, they're paying to-night fer her crew. I got it in the Bells of Shandon.'

"What was there to do? There was no law in them days fer a sailor. Onct aboard that craft, a man was as good as out to sea. The masters had the courts then. These things was a-running through my head, and I was a-trying to give Nellie some comfort, a-telling her, 'There, there,' and the like.

"Then she turned on me. 'Ye have got to get him,' she sung out. 'Ye have got to get him back for me.'

"Then Black Scotty swore a big oath, round and free as if no woman was a-nigh. And says he: 'Mates, the lass is right. It is the only way. Come on. We'll go shanghai that lad back agin.'

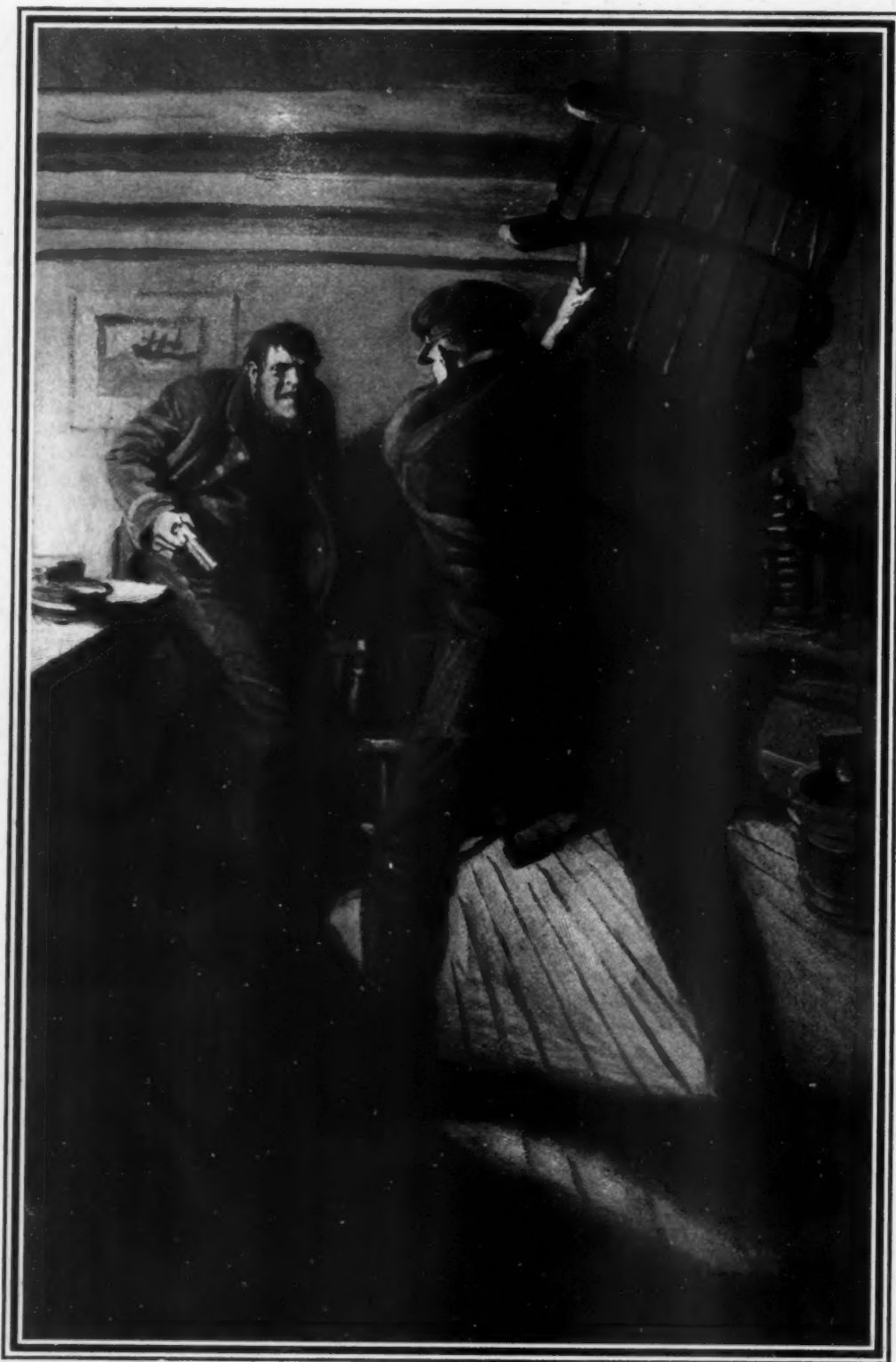
"'Hold hard,' says I. 'This is easy talking. But what ye say is no more nor less than piracy.'

"Black Scotty, he looked me between the eyes, and says he: 'Piracy,' says he; 'name it if ye want to. What odds does that make, the name ye give it? I'm going to get that lad back fer his girl.'

"'Well,' says I, 'no need to make so much noise about it if ye are. So am I, too, fer the matter of that.'

"And the rest of us goes,' says Red Larson. 'Don't we, mates?'

"Olaf Hansen, he was swearing down under his red mustache in Swede, and



'The two of us let fly together'

Manuel says something along the same lines in Portuguese. Lad, ye can lay to it, there was no man in that crowd of bullies tuk any thought but the one. And, says I to Nellie:

"Now," says I, 'Lass, do ye be goin' home. We will tend to Larry.'

"I mind how her eyes was blazing and her breath was a-coming hard, and she turned on me. 'Go home?' says she. 'I'll go with ye. I cannot stay and wait.'

"Well, I tried to talk with her and I might as well of saved my wind. And whilst I was doing that, Black Scotty began to make fer the door.

"I tell ye," he sung out, 'by this time Jim White will be ashore agin, and in another hour the rest of the crew will be aboard. Will ye stand here the balance of the night?'

"So we put our heads together and Nellie stood by while we was a-talking. We made it up to slip down by Mother Martin's place in twos and threes and take a whaleboat that Black Scotty knowed of by the old sea wall.

"Easy enough," says Scotty; 'we can handle them on deck, and one or two drop down on the skipper in the cabin whilst the balance of us goes through the fo'castle lively like.'

"And so we laid it out. The others left, and I was the last. Nellie went with me. The whaleboat was there, moored to the old sea wall, and black with men in the shadows of the night. No sooner had we two piled in than Scotty sung out, quiet as maybe, 'Give way.'

"A dark night with a lively gale blowing up the harbor and a flurry of rain every so often. Ye could not see two boats' lengths ahead. It was pretty lumpy on the bay and I could feel the spray now and agin when we would ship a hatfull or two of water."

Lighthouse Tom paused to light his pipe and looked around the room. The sailors were gathered in groups; some were arguing with uplifted fists; some were laughing and oaths boomed from the lips of many.

"Never a crew like that agin," said he. "They do not make that manner of men these days. A different breed! These

in that whaleboat was *men*, they was.

"And whilst I was a-pulling away, with the wind a-cuffing me alongside of the head and the smell of the bay a-coming in with every long breath, I remembered that I was a married man, with wife and childer up home on Rincon Hill; and I felt that like as not I was a fool to be out here all along of Black Scotty's orders. For that was what it come to. And then I thought of the girl we was a-taking, and how there would be ugly business ahead. It seemed like I must of lost my senses to stand fer it. But no time fer that sort of thinkin' now. I tried to put it out of my mind.

"The bay was black as your hat, and here and there a ship's light made a crooked streak on the water as we run under some vessel's stern. There was times when ye could not see two oars' lengths before ye. And no man in our boat spoke a word, onless it would be Black Scotty a-singing out some order very quiet like. Piracy it was that laid before us, and mebbe worse. For the mates on the *Evenin' Star* was not the sort to make windy argyment, if there was belayin' pins in reach. My mind was heavy with these thing, and I did not take note of how fur we had gone, when the word come to 'up oars and stand by.'

"The wind and tide was with us, and there laid the *Evenin' Star*. We was drifting down on her fast. Big and black she looked, a-swinging on her cable in the stream. We was as still as if we was a shadow. Down we drifted, right under her bows.

"We come a-slipping along her side. And as we come we fended off with our hands, so that we did not make a sound. Down between the thwarts, cuddled clost to me, I could feel Nellie a-shaking like a leaf. I bent my head clost to her ear and I told her she must stand by in the boat and—no matter what she heard—she must not come aboard ship. Then we was alongside the gangway ladder.

"There was a man or two on watch on deck. And they had never seen nor heard us as yet. But now Black Scotty was on the ladder and two men had boat hooks out a-holding fast. And—

"Boat ahoy," I heard some one sing



"I out with my knife and cut the ropes"

out on 'deck; and then, 'Is that you, Jim?' And even in the second it took me to see that this one would be at least a mate, fer calling Jim White by his first name, I heard his feet a-pounding on the planking as he come to the gangway. And hard on that, I grabbed a hold myself to board her; then, 'What the hell?' yelled the man. In the same minute Black Scotty had him by the throat.

"I was aboard while the two of them was going down together. An almighty smash they made when they hit the planks. I stumbled over them and I felt Red Larson a-shoving me from behind; and back of him I heard Olaf Hansen a-swearing in Swede, and Manuel's piping v'ice sputtering out sailors' oaths in Portugee. And, 'Do ye make for the fo'c'stle,' I says over my shoulder to Red. Then I run on aft.

"A man or two was coming from forward; I could hear them as I run. And I could hear the balance of our crew swearing and thumping their boots agin the timbers as they piled overside. I went fer the cabin with all sail on. For well I knowed that if real trouble come, it would be from that end of the ship.

"I reached the house and started down the stairs. I made them in two jumps. Inside the cabin it was all alight. The skipper had been a-setting there by himself, a-taking a quiet drink, and now he was up on his feet. I take it that he had an idee it was Jim White back with the balance of his crew; for many's the men was landed aboard the old *Evenin' Star* with an almighty lot of noise.

"I was big enough then, and harder than I am now, and quick. And I come into the middle of the floor before he well seen what or who I was. One of them old blue-bellied Yankee skippers, he was, with a ring of whiskers under his chin. I mind a-taking note of how his face growed red, and then he made a dive fer his breeches pocket.

"I had my legs good and under me when I come down in the middle of the cabin floor on that last jump. I seen a heavy chair and I picked it up. And about the same time he out with a pistol. The two of us let fly together.

"Well, it was all things at onct then—a roar of noise and a smother of powder smoke, and the smash of that chair agin the bulkhead. I ducked low, and I made a dive for where I had seen him last. And lucky enough I did that, too. Fer I had missed him as he had missed me; and now he was a-shooting agin. By the time he had let go that other shot, I had him by the legs, and he went down, with me on top of him. I knowed what it was I wanted most; and I had him fast by the wrist before he had more than cap-sized. I twisted his arm and the gun fell on the floor.

"Two of our byes come a-biling in whilst I was at that; they helped me take a turn or two of rope about his legs and wrists. We left him on the floor a-cursing us, when we run back to the deck.

"From forward come the noise of what sounded like a free-fer-all. A smash and then a yell and then a smash agin. And in it I heard Red Larson belling like a bull walrus. I seen Black Scotty, with his face all red from his own blood, grappled with one of the mates. They was on the floor together and at it like a pair of fighting dogs. And in and out and all around was the poor devils of the *Evenin' Star's* crew. Some of them was a-fighting and some was a-standing by; and none of them had any notion of what they was a-doing or why. I dived through the ruck and took a look about fer Larry.

"I did not see him at first; but when I had gone onto where the bunks come together near the eyes of the ship, I seen him in one of them. Trussed up he was, and that right neatly, too. I out with my knife and cut the ropes. And then I shoved him ahead of me right through the middle of the fight that was still a-going on. 'All hands!' I sung out as I went; and I give ye my word, lad, I had to raise my v'ice to make the words sound louder than a whisper.

"Well, 'All hands' was easier said than done. I lost no time a-getting Larry out. He went in front of me, and did not stop. But the rest of the byes was more or less tied up. So we two stopped on the deck, and I was in half a mind

that the pair of us should go back agin and help my mates out when Red Larson come up, and then Black Scotty, a-wiping his face with his sleeve. And hard on his heels come Manuel.

"'Get them out,' I told Scotty; and he bellered down to the rest. I heard them a-coming as fast as they could cast loose from them that held on. And Larry and I made fer the boat. And as we went a-running, I heard a racket aft; and some one was a-coming towards us. It was Nellie.

"Her hair was loose-like and her eyes was a-blazing so that I could see the lights from them through the dark. And when she got sight of us, she hailed.

"'Quick!' she sung out. 'They're here, in a boat.' And with that she throwed herself on Larry; and I left the two of them together there. I roared to the rest of them forard and they come running. And none too soon. Fer here was Jim White and two boarding house runners piling down on top of us.

"Nellie told me arterwards how she had heard them come as she was a-waiting there alone in our whaleboat; and how she had been a-scared to move until she got the v'ice of Jim White a-cursing at the noise we was a-making in the fo'c'stle. Then she run up the ladder and come to give us word.

"Well, they must of thought it was a mutiny among the shanghaied crew of theirs, fer they left the half dozen they had in their boat, and come on right away to take a hand. They did not look fer the likes of us. We met them head on, right amidships. Me and Manuel had one of the runners by the throat and down in less time than it takes to tell; and Red Larson and Olaf Hansen was settling his mate. But Black Scotty, he made fer Jim White alone. By the time the others of us was on our feet and ready to make fer the boat, them two was at it hard and heavy—as pretty a fight as any man would want to watch. But there was no time fer pleasure then; and so I jumped Jim White from behind and got my arm under his chin. He come loose handy enough with my knee in the middle of his back. And I started fer the boat.

"Lad, ye should of heard Black Scotty abuse me as he come alongside me. He was that mad from having that mix-up of his spiled. It seems like Jim White had smashed him one good one on the nose, too. I told him to stow his talk, and the next minute we was at our oars and making fer the shore.

"No time fer wasting words now. We could hear the yelling on the *Evenin' Star* behind us; and any minute there might be some one a-making fer the ship from the docks. We did not stand by, ye can lay to that. And when we got back to the old seawall, it was a case of scatter and no orders needed.

"Only Black Scotty and me was left with Larry and his lass when the rest of them was out of sight. Nellie had kept Scotty fer a minute, a-telling him how brave a man he was and the like. Then Larry made to shake hands with him.

"Them two took hold of each other's fists; and fer all that there was no light here at all and the night was black, I seen something strange. They gripped hands; and Larry said a word or two, like 'Thank ye' and then he stopped; and then I seen them a-standing with their heads clost together like they would be taking a clost look. And then they cast loose.

"Black Scotty and I went away together. He did not say a word to me. When we got up by the Pacific Mail docks, where there was light, I give him an eye. And his face was like the face of a man who is a-trying to figger out where he has been and what he has been a-doing and why.

"'What,' says I, 'is bothering ye?'

"'Tom,' says he, 'do ye know who that lad was?'

"'Why, yes,' says I, 'I know him well.'

"'Ye do,' says he. 'And so do I. I combed the city front a-trying to find him. No wonder I could not lay my eyes on him then. That is the Irishman I was a-looking fer to tear his head off,' says he.

"'Anyhow,' says he after a bit, 'I got a good fight out of this.'

"And with that I left him and went home to the missus and the babies."



The runabout was roomy, there were ceiling-lights, mirrors, flower pots, clock, intellectual shock-absorber—complete except for a small range and a couple of waffle-irons

The RIPPLE CASE

By ERNEST L. STARR

Illustrated by EDMUND FREDERICK

DIVORCES are easy in Denver. They are not played up for advertising purposes quite as strongly as the Barbary Coast is by San Francisco, yet there is always a certain gentle courtesy on the part of the officials concerned.

Now and then a judge anticipates a future tenure and gets good newspaper space by decrying the evil. You will notice, however, that this usually occurs at the end of a day in which a dozen decrees, more or less, have been granted in his court.

The newspapers, strangely enough,

give more space to the condemnation than to the potentially rich news-stories in the divorces themselves, which you will grant is a very commendable form of civic pride. Usually the number of cases disposed of is grouped under one heading and placed inconspicuously on the page.

Meanwhile the population is steadily augmented as the operation of establishing residence continues. Do not consider the foregoing a reflection on Denver. It is a chaste city, where taxes are assessed honestly and the moral fence is kept well-paled and in order.

Mrs. Loudon Ripple was in her bath when the telephone rang. After disregarding two reverberations, she dripped over to the connection in her bedroom.

"Injunction?" she queried moistly, as she pulled her clammy kimono tighter. "Injunction? Divorce papers? You must be—what?" Then she laughed pleasantly and said: "Oh, yes; this is Mr. Monk's office, isn't it? Yes, I did file a suit; I remember now. I don't want it any more, though—of course, I don't! I asked Mr. Monk to suppress the papers; telephoned your office three weeks ago; told you to call it all off—I did, I did, I did! Somebody assured me the papers would be suppressed—You can't? Why? I don't want it. I won't have a divorce! I—you—why—" And Mrs. Ripple explosively hung up the receiver.

She seeped across the room and slipped back weakly into her bath.

"Suppose Loudon should find it out!" she said, dabbing a cold soapy sponge into her eyes. She bent her head and sobbed out her little heart, which was just as fluffy as her light little head. "I won't, I won't! Oh, if I had even ninety-eight cents worth of everyday common sense!"

Half an hour later, as Mrs. Ripple was despairing over which hat "went" best with her *matinée* gown, the gong of an electric motor jingled beneath her window. She peeped out and espied an edge of the large and purple plumed hat within the runabout.

"Aha," she said, "then I'll wear this one," smiling as a woman does when she is about to meet her bosom enemy and dearest pest, wearing a hat abominably prettier than the pest's.

The maid who had come up to say that Mrs. Webster was waiting, straightened something in the back of the gown, and Mrs. Ripple was off. She fluttered into the electric, offering and receiving a thick, dotted-veil kiss.

The runabout was the last gift of Mrs. Webster's former husband, though it may have been a former gift of her last husband. It may be stated positively, however, that one of the alternatives held good, because in Denver, when alimony is given in a lump sum, a motor

of some kind is usually thrown in. It is not known whether this is in the nature of a trade inducement or merely a bestowal of good will from the dissolved partner. The idea of quick motion associated with a car of any variety is thought to be of solace to the enfranchised wife. He could throw in a perambulator, but it does not move very quickly—which would be a handicap, especially if there were anything inside. *Divorcées* so seldom need perambulators.

These details are unnecessary, since Mrs. Webster had been divorced but once, and a single divorce is of no more consequence than a trust dissolution. She drew a runabout instead of a perambulator, and was tall, dark, and spiteful as a deposed President's wife.

Of the women of her acquaintance, Polly Ripple disliked Mrs. Webster most heartily and associated with her most frequently. Possibly you have found yourself day after day seeking the companionship of some one who rubs you the wrong way fifty-five minutes out of every sixty. It is not policy with you, any more than it was with Polly. Doubtless it is due to certain similarities of inclination which overbalance the many dissimilarities of taste. You both like baseball, or Benedictine, or the theatre, or Baudelaire, while you know in your deepest heart that the other hasn't the manners of an Apache or the morals of a monkey-wrench.

Polly found in Ethel Webster a wider knowledge of the world that in unguarded moments made her eyes pop with curiosity, a wisdom and weariness that seemed the most desirable of qualities. The hardness and petty jealousy which accompanied them she found entirely distasteful. Mrs. Webster's efforts to mix with both the political and heavy bridge sets did not help her to get on. Her political dinners were thoroughly "ring," while Polly's Mr. Loudon Ripple was a coming leader of the opposition.

Polly did not bother her head about affairs, and when Mrs. Webster hinted at secret power and inner knowledge that would have made an ambassador's wife blush for shame, Polly laughed. Their differences were numerous, yet



After disregarding two reverberations she dripped over to the telephone. "Injunction?" she queried moistly, as she pulled her clammy kimono tighter. "Injunction? Divorce papers?"

their *matinée* and luncheon association seemed permanent. Most of the time Polly hated Mrs. Webster as a Jap does vodka, but often she envied the worldly wisdom and sleepy-eyed weariness that were so interesting and seemed so real. Through it all and above everything, Polly's little heart ached to its very basement with especial envy for two of Ethel's possessions about which most glamour spread—the electric and her divorce.

Both were of the finest material and workmanship. The runabout was roomy, plate-glassed and comfortable—dark gray outside and the fashionable pink within, a shade between maiden's-choke and salmon-blush. There were ceiling-lights, mirrors, speedometers with persiflage attachment, flower pots, clock, intellectual shock-absorber, and a tube to breathe through—complete except for a small range and a couple of waffle-irons.

The divorce was of the dreadnaught type. There was nothing interlocutory about it, nor was it akin to the decree *nisi*, meaning not nice. The re-marriage clause was so simple a child could understand it. The ignition system was absolutely *nolo contendere*. It was an ingenious, iron-clad, straightforward document—in fact, a smooth, honest Denver divorce.

"Your eyes are red," observed Mrs. Webster.

"Got soap in them," said Polly.

"You've been crying," the other insisted.

"How absurd! I never cry."

They stopped at the Shirley, one of the most delightful caravanserais, to pick up a millionaire miner's wife from Cripple Creek. Her feet were suggestive of bread puddings and she was ornamented like a Daniel Low catalogue. Then they went to see five acts of vaudeville.

From acrobats to Western picture drama, made in Chicago, Polly sat in her own little cloud of gloom. The air was full of holes and she was dropping down, down to meet destruction—and Mr. Loudon Ripple. What would Loudon say when he heard of the suit? Why, why couldn't it have been suppressed before he found out? She hoped he would catch her by the throat and shake her till her ears wobbled. That would make him feel better, and perhaps he wouldn't lecture her in the way she so detested. Couldn't the lawyers suppress a thing when they were told to? Filing divorce papers seemed like murder—or a collar button—it would out.

As they left the theatre they met Miss Perkins, "sob writer" on *The Evening Telegram*. Polly had known her well before the tearful pen was requisitioned in support of the orphaned little Perkinses. Grasping her arm, Polly whispered, "Is there something about me in the paper?"

"Third page—"

"Shsh! It's all a mistake."

"Also in the social news."

"If anyone asks you," whispered Polly, "say you think it's a mistake, and Heaven help me!" she finished fervently, urging Mrs. Webster and the bread puddings toward the electric.

"The fun is on you, Polly," Miss Perkins said. "The hearing is down for Judge Goddard's court."

"Oh—oh, piffle!" said Polly, using her strongest oath.

"That is, if he isn't recalled before the date," murmured Miss Perkins down Polly's neck.

Sensations were coming thick and fast for Polly. "What do you mean?"

"The other faction thinks it has him. The city editor said this afternoon that Goddard will be a political dead one in two days."

Mrs. Webster caught the last clause and turned eagerly to the speaker. Conversation being impossible in the crowd, she invited Miss Perkins into the electric.

"Why do you think Judge Goddard's political power is in danger?" she asked, steering the car safely between a Sixteenth Street masher and a nice blonde saving her skirt from the mud.

"Because he has blundered badly," said Miss Perkins, "and, on account of this mistake, the opposition will spring a surprise that will knock his senatorship scheme higher than Gaby kicked the crown. In fact, if the sensation develops properly Goddard is apt to think it wise to spend a year in Europe."

"It will never happen," Mrs. Webster expostulated warmly.

"They say he gave himself away to a woman," went on Miss Perkins, "—poured the Ring secrets into the auricular opening just above the pearl pendant. Somebody saw a letter he wrote her. I'd give my real Valenciennes corset-cover to know who she is. Now they are looking for the rest of the letters, and they will find them if money and private detectives and perfectly honest maids are to be trusted. Those things always turn up. Probably the woman herself will tell."

Mrs. Webster seemed breathless for a moment. Then she smiled slowly and knowingly, and said: "The woman Goddard confides in is not the kind to tell."

"Humph!" objected Miss Perkins, "he hasn't been seen with a decent woman for two years, except at the dinners he's invited to along with the rest of the gang. The woman Goddard confides in is apt to be a demi!"

Polly saw an unprecedented thing. Mrs. Webster turned red, the kind of blush that you know is coming in spite of every determination to check it, that slips down over you like hot spilt soup, and will not be stopped by anything short of sudden death. It must have been this kind, because Polly had never seen Ethel Webster commit anything so essentially virginal as an unpremeditated blush.

But Polly was too thoroughly obsessed by her own thoughts to follow it up then. She put it away in her mental

fling-case indexed under "Future Investigation." It was bad enough, Polly was assuring herself, to have an undesired possibility of separate maintenance weighting her heart down into her pumps, without this Goddard person mixing in.

Judge Goddard had shown the bad taste to make good after she refused to marry him. He had succeeded, but Polly considered him a very, very bad sort. He was one of the Ring, and Loudén said that was as low as a man could fall. Polly had taken thought to what extent her own fluffy self was responsible for the rivalry between them, and she feared that the remotest connection of the man's name with the suit, even as presiding judge, would anger Loudén past placating.

The case probably would come up; she couldn't yet see how she could stop it. Possibly Loudén would help her, after he was tired shaking her, and just as possibly he wouldn't. That was the way with these courts: mention a little whisper of a suit, just for fun, you know, and they made you have it anyhow—tagged you with a divorce whether or not you wanted it.

She prattled something very like a prayerlet that he wouldn't hear it or read his paper before she saw him, which would give her time at least to try to find a way out. The thought of losing this solemn, friendly lover gave her heart a twist.

Ripple was a solid young man. If you happen to have a solid young man for a kinsman you are ready to give the hand of sympathy and fellowship to every Polly who is married to one of them. A solid young man can as perfectly extract fun from the lives of the people thrown with him as the steel rollers in a Louisiana sugar-house squeeze juice from the cane. In one case the dry fiber that remains is called *bagasse*, and is fed to the furnace; in the other the unwillingly reconstructed individuals he has so constantly and consciously benefited will blaze into any extravagance, like dry-as-dust fiber, as soon as relief may be secured from his chastening influence.

The solid young man gets on. He is

not handicapped by sensitiveness or a sense of humor. He doesn't buy expensive luncheons; he prefers California wines and first balconies. He lets you pay your own car fare and uses penny postal cards. He gets on—but not with the people who must live with him.

But Ripple had heard. He met Polly with a glance coldly intense enough to discountenance a brass Buddha.

"Well, Polly?" Ripple threw out into the still air.

"It was a month ago," Polly said miserably. "Monk and Lewis took the case. Then I changed my mind, and a week later I told them to suppress the papers. They failed to do it somehow."

Ripple's manner approached the forensic, but something deeper and more intimate than mere resentment sounded in his voice.

"What possessed you, Polly?"

From Polly, silence and the gasp of a swimmer on an early spring morning.

"Have I mistreated you?"

"No."

"Have I struck you or mauled you?"

"No."

"Haven't I provided?"

"Yes."

"Haven't you been happy?"

"Y—yes."

"Haven't I given you what you asked for?"

"Y—yes, except the electric."

"That was settled a month ago."

"That's when I filed the suit."

"Oh!" said Ripple.

"You wouldn't get one for me!"

"It's idiotic, Polly. You know you can use my motor whenever you want it. It is kept in good order, and gasoline cars are far more serviceable."

Polly had an idea she was going to cry in about sixty seconds. "So are wooden shoes," she said. "I never did understand it, with all your explanations. Whenever I get in it something goes wrong. The clutch wont cl—clutch, or the buzzing coil wont b-b-buzz. It doesn't transmit worth a cent, anyhow; and it sm-smells like the dickens! Every woman I know has an electric runabout and I asked you, I begged you for one."



"Have you thought of the humiliation of having the hearing before Goddard? Of all things under heaven!"

I begged you! Ethel has a beauty. She got her alimony in a lump sum, with the electric thrown in. I thought maybe you would be glad enough to give me one that way—

"And I would have had such fun taking you down town in the mornings," she ended forlornly.

"You didn't expect me to pay for it and ride in it, too, did you?" Ripple in-



"Well, I didn't pick him out! I simply asked the lawyers to get me a quiet, easy divorce. That's Mr. Monk's especial strength. I didn't dream he would mess it up so."

quired scornfully. "Electric runabouts are frivolous. Polly, I want to ask you: have you loved me at all?"

"Yes," emphatically, "more even, than you love that precious Reform Party."

"Then how could you do it?"

"Well, it wouldn't make any difference, would it? I didn't intend to marry, unless you wanted me again."

Ripple was getting solidly angry.

"Besides, you laugh at me when I make suggestions." The snap to Polly's eyes was coming back. "You choked when I wanted you to sell the house."

"Why, Polly, why?"

"Because we could live as reasonably at a hotel until you are ready to buy up on the Hill."

"There's another reason: you wouldn't have to keep house, and there would be more time for matinées and bridge."

"Louden! The house creaks all over! Every bathroom leaks, and I've lost three cooks because the range wont draw, and the furnace burns enough fuel to run a crematory."

"If it will give you pleasure," Ripple said overwhelmingly, "I may tell you that I sold it yesterday; papers to be signed in the morning."

"I am very much disappointed, Louden. I wanted to sell it to the Webster's. I'd ask nothing better. Ethel would have bought the old thing for spite, if she had thought we were broke."

"It is sold," said Ripple finally.

"But you didn't do it for me. I could have implored you till Universal Peace comes and you wouldn't have sold a door knob. My only reason for urging it and moving over on the Hill—was you. It would add to your prestige."

"You don't mean you have given a thought to my success!"

"Of course I have!"

"Very likely. You have a delicate way of showing your interest. Couldn't you see that a divorce would ruin me? You know very well what the Reform Party stands for. We are determined to kill out this divorce traffic, and expose the Ring, Goddard first of all. Here on the eve of our first big success comes a divorce suit against a leader of the Party. That's what I would have been, Polly, if we could have carried it through—a leader. Suit against me! It will be pie for them. Moreover, have you thought of the humiliation of having the hearing before Goddard? Of all things under heaven! If you had searched long for the most exquisite and ironic humiliation, you couldn't have beat it."

"Well, I didn't pick him out! I simply asked the lawyers to get me a quiet,

easy divorce. That's Mr. Monk's especial strength. I didn't dream he would mess it up so. He got Ethel's decree, and Mary Hill's, and Bettie Chambers' and lots of others. I wanted to do it quietly, Louden, truly I did, until I decided I didn't want any at all."

"May I ask what led you to reconsider?"

"I—Louden, I don't want the electric as much as I do you."

"You have grieved me deeply, Polly."

"I am sorry, awfully sorry, Louden. I tried hard not to."

"After it was done. You should have thought first." He might have added that stolid people always do, and of themselves first.

"I've been thinking until my head hurts; there must be a way out."

"Possibly; but you have ruined my political chance."

"Oh, oh!" said Polly, tears in her eyes.

Since Ripple did not like tears, weak, unsuffrage-like tears, he qualified: "You've set me back five years at least."

"I'd give anything to undo it! Louden, suppose I can?"

"Undo it? The statement of the thing does the harm."

"Why couldn't I fix it up? Make it seem a great mistake?"

"It is on the records. The fact of its ever being known does the harm."

"Records have been changed," said Polly hopefully and truthfully.

"The lawyers know the truth," objected Ripple.

"Truth has an assessed valuation." Polly had read it somewhere. "The papers might find they had been in error."

"You couldn't convince them, considering their attitude toward the Reform Party."

"I would if I could fix the other first. Then they would print a *correctum*."

"What's that?" Ripple asked patiently.

"It's like the mistakes apologized for in the back of a book. It's, er, a chaser to an *erratum*."

"Polly, it can't be done."

"But suppose, suppose!"

At the end of an hour Ripple, puz-

zled, unconvinced, was willing for her to try. He had been made to understand that his wife was a Colorado woman, in the completest sense of the term. Also he had taken out a check-book and asked the price of an electric. Polly, great in grasping opportunities, went the limit. The figure she named would undoubtedly insure seltzer-charging and mayonnaise-mixing attachments.

When they had gone upstairs, Ripple said: "But I insist on knowing how you are going to do it."

"Don't pester me!" Polly said.

"Polly?"

"Yes?"

"What—"

"Louden, I'm not sure myself yet!"

The next day was the busiest Mrs. Ripple ever spent. Having thrown away and remade a system of ethics, she went first to Judge Goddard's office. Fortified by an early morning flash of that especially feminine prerogative more wonderful than wireless, and the most girlish street costume she owned, she stepped bravely into Goddard's private office. She had not seen him alone for more than four years, and if she could, she would have made him forget the happenings of the interim.

After a ten-minute recital from Polly, which she tried to saturate with the old-time intimacy, she said: "You are going to help me, aren't you, Tom?"

But four years had passed, you see; and people change.

"There is nothing I can do," said Judge Goddard.

"Oh!" said Polly, and sat up very straight. Immediately she decided that what Miss Perkins said was true after all. She had come to play the age-old woman's rôle; now she called on the means that were her last resource. She would play the game of scalps, and there was a hook on her belt waiting for Goddard's. "Then you are going to use it against him."

"Does he know you have come to me?" Goddard asked.

"He would have tied me to a radiator first. This means a great deal to me, Tom."

"I am sorry, Mrs. Ripple, but it is too good an opportunity to pass up. A near-leader I know, must give his own party a dose of the specific he has been administering to us. In politics there is no better weapon than derision."

"Except possibly letters written to a woman," said Polly thoughtfully.

Goddard looked up sharply, but Polly had blanked her expressive small face, and was occupied largely in patting her big hand-bag. Any effort to read the riddle must necessarily have failed.

Polly leaned toward Goddard's desk and with apparent unconsciousness read the top letter awaiting his signature. Very deliberately she read it through; then she started and made a pretty gesture of confusion.

"How thoughtless of me!" she said. "You must pardon me, Tom. I have such a way of reading other people's letters. I never lose an opportunity to do it. Isn't it frightful?" She rose as if to go.

Goddard was thinking with so much concentration, that he forgot to rise.

"I hear Ethel Webster speak of you often," Polly said indifferently. "She seems rather to like you, Tom. Speaking of letters, Ethel isn't very careful with hers. She keeps the most valuable in a little Japanese box in the compartment on her desk. The box doesn't stay locked half of the time, and when it is, one may pick it easily with a hair pin."

Goddard moved toward her somewhat quickly and anxiously.

"You are not going, Polly, really," he said. "I'd be so glad to have you stay."

"Ethel is my dearest friend," Polly continued pleasantly. "I love her so well there is almost nothing I would not do to hurt her. Yes, I must be going, really."

"Then I'll go with you," Goddard said, acknowledging his defeat with the courtesy of a Ringer, which is as pervasive as that with which Goliath accepted the cup of tea David offered after the stone-throwing was over.

He called a taxi and gave the direction: "City Hall."

Magically he shut and opened doors, eyes and books, and at length he let her

see the result in the scratching of her name from the one great book.

"You will play fair, Polly?" he said.

"I'll play fair," Polly said solemnly, as they shook hands. "No one, Tom, I promise you—no one shall ever learn what I know."

She kept the taxi and went on to the law offices of Monk and Lewis, purveyors of patent easement to the sick and husband-laden. It is thought that the desuetude of Mr. Monk's disposition dates from that interview. It lasted an hour. Polly came out a bit hoarse, but vastly militant. Behind her came Mr. Monk, febrile, devastated, cowed.

Together they sought the city editor of *The Evening Telegram*. A city editor is a ponderous person, but when a lady comes in with a case-winning lawyer and says, "You done me wrong," or words to that effect, he listens.

The city editor had nothing but a bottle in the lowest drawer of his desk to offer with his apology, so of course he offered nothing. The apology, however, was given as freely and generously withal as senatorial election money. He forbore to inquire just the significance of the "*correctum*" Mrs. Ripple so earnestly desired, but he promised wide publicity in the afternoon issue to the statement that a deplorable mistake had been made in accrediting a suit for divorce to Mrs. Loudon Ripple, wife of Mr. Loudon Ripple, the well-known leader of the Reform Party—that the lady referred to was Mrs. *Lawson* Ripple, formerly of Yucatan, who had moved to Canton, China, since filing divorce papers a few days ago—that the unfortunate similarity of names had been the cause of the preposterous blunder.

Then Polly hurried to the Howard National. She wanted the feel of the money in her bare hands; she felt the call of the certified crinkle.

Meanwhile Mr. Loudon Ripple's morning had not been uneventful.

In accordance with his statement to Polly, he was promptly sought by the agent of the purchaser of the house. The figure had been practically agreed upon. Mr. Ripple momentarily heckled the

agent, perhaps with a view to securing a more substantial offer. It was a procedure sanctioned by solid business usage. Yet if Mr. Ripple had asked advice of the first barterer who should pass his door, he would undoubtedly have been told that delaying the consummation of a trade is more often than not both dangerous and disastrous.

As the papers of the deed of sale were being irritatingly flipped against the arm of his chair, a stranger was admitted.

"Are you Mr. Loudon Ripple?"

Upon receiving a ready assent, the stranger continued, the indifference of long usage in his tones: "I am obligated in the name of the law, Mr. Ripple, to serve these papers on you."

Therewith he placed a red-sealed document on the desk, and with an abominably cheerful "G'morning," passed on.

Mystification and chagrin in his voice, Ripple read aloud the grateful news that he was enjoined by the laws of the sovereign state of Colorado from selling his house, and from signing all deeds or documents which would in any way enable him to dispose of property, bonded or real.

In Ripple's face appeared an anxious, puzzled uncertainty, indicating that his urgent cogitations were getting him nowhere. He gave no explanation to the buying agent, the reason for which was obvious. Conversation lagged. Ripple spoke of "some mistake somewhere." The agent left. Ripple swore liquidly.

He called up the Howard National and asked the amount of his balance. The answer came back in a series of figures with the decimal point far enough to the right to appease a grouch, but—The cashier himself was replying. There could be no doubt of the truth of the statement following the "but." But—Mr. Ripple's funds had been garnisheed. Papers had just been served.

Ripple seemed literally to congeal. It's a way with solid people. The atmosphere of the room was suggestive of Telluride in January. His eyes crackled like northern lights; his nose looked frost-bitten.

Just then the process-server returned. "I forgot to hand you this with the



"Mr. Monk please ungarnish that bank account; will you? And, Mr. Monk, were all those injunctions and things necessary?—Oh! —I've never been divorced before, you know, and you didn't tell me—Oh, I see!"

other," he said cheerfully. "This one is an injunction—" He unfolded a paper similarly decorated in festive red, and glanced lightly at its portentous message: "An injunction to prevent Mr. Louden Ripple from molesting Mrs. Ripple in any way, and to prevent Mr. Ripple's interfering with Mrs. Ripple's occupancy of the home. You are Mr. Louden Ripple, aren't you?"

Arctically Ripple replied, "I am still he."

The process server put the paper into Ripple's hand, adding, "That's about all, I guess. G'-morning."

The door closed, but was immediately

reopened. The person thrust in his head and said:

"It's Monk and Lewis that's having the injunctions served for Mrs. Ripple. Thought you might like to know."

Some wise, safe-guarding Providence had taken from Ripple a privilege the thought of which probably made his hands stretch out tingling and desirous, the privilege of molesting Mrs. Ripple.

Polly waited at a paying window through a period that seemed like a sidereal space. At length the check came back—not the money.

"I am sorry, Mrs. Ripple," said a dis-

creet teller. "A temporary thing, no doubt."

It was marked, "No funds."

"Would you care to speak to the cashier?" asked the clerk.

"No, no, thank you."

Polly stumbled through the wreckage of an electric runabout that fell around her ears, about her knees, everywhere. No funds; no car. It didn't seem possible. It was a trick. It was his way of punishing her; and a mean, contemptible advantage to take. Hadn't she done all she could, and more than he could have done? She'd have him to understand—

She reached his office with wifely submission lashed unregretfully to the mast.

"Louden!" she said, thrusting out the check, "what does this mean?"

Ripple shut a drawer a bit too carefully, and turned slowly in his chair. He looked at her with glacial ferocity.

"The check wasn't good, was it?" he said.

"I've never been so humiliated, never! I was turned away from the window like a thief!" Polly cried.

"Humiliated you?" Ripple said cuttingly. "Well then, Polly, I think you'd better go ahead with your divorce."

"Indeed I will not! After I've been jumping around like a Hopi snake dancer! If this is your way of evening up, you're not a good sportsman!"

For a moment Ripple seemed unable to speak.

"Do you know what you have done to me?" he cried, the color of an asthmatic lobster. "You have prevented my selling the house, or signing a deed, or drawing a plugged dime from bank!"

"I have not!" Polly exclaimed.

"Your lawyers did."

"Why, all I wanted was a quiet, easy—" Polly began.

"And your damfool shyster lawyers," Ripple went on hotly, "got out injunctions enough to choke a hippopotamus."

"I didn't know a thing about it, Louden. On my honor as a voter, I didn't!"

"It was your business to know! You could have spared me all this!"

"I hadn't the faintest idea, Louden! All I asked for was a quiet—"

"Don't say it again! I've said 'There must be some mistake,' until I'm ready to shoot Monkey and Lewis on sight! I've embarrassed and humiliated you! What have *you* done?"

"I've fixed it!" Polly's little head was thrown back joyously.

"Humph!" Ripple sneered.

"But I have! I have!" Polly said. She put her arms around his neck and filled his eyes with fluffy hair. "I've got the case off the books. I had the Loudens changed to Lawsons, so that the thing reads Mrs. Lawson *versus* Mr. Lawson Ripple, and nobody will suspect us after the announcement has been made. The *Evening Telegram* will state this afternoon that yesterday's account was all wrong; that Mr. and Mrs. Loudens Ripple are the happiest people in Denver!"

"What good will that do?" asked Ripple, loath to be convinced.

"Nobody can deny that it is the Lawsons Ripples who deserve the publicity and injunctions, because Mrs. Ripple has gone away and Mr. Lawson Ripple hasn't been born yet! Isn't it delicious?"

Ripple was about as animated as a frozen pudding. Polly crossed the room and got Mr. Monk on the phone.

"Mr. Monk, please ungarnish that bank account; will you? You will at once, immediately?—And, Mr. Monk, were all those injunctions and things necessary?—Oh!—I've never been divorced before, you know, and you didn't tell me—Oh, I see!"

She put a hand over the mouth-piece and said to Ripple: "It's perfectly clear, Loudens. Mr. Monk tells me it makes the suit look better, more intense and acrimonious; that's why. It's always done here. Everybody has the injunctions, everybody, because it's the Denver way to get a nice, quiet, easy—"

"Polly!" Ripple cried sharply, and Polly thought the unwilling smile stealing over his face the best thing she had seen in many hours.

"And Mr. Monk," laughed Polly into the telephone, "where did you say poor Mrs. Lawson Ripple went? Was it Canton, China, or Canton, Ohio?"

The WEAK SPOT

By
EDWIN BALMER

Author of "Waylaid by Wireless" etc.

ILLUSTRATED

BY

J. HENRY BRACKER

IT was the night of the great wheat corner in Chicago—the hot, breathless night after the July day upon which Gideon Nash, mercilessly surprising the "shorts" with the tremendous total of his buying and the strength of the alliances which had quietly been bringing him control of the market, forced the price up and up, point after point, from the first wild panic of the opening moment of the Chicago Board of Trade, to the last frantic, Bedlam sixty seconds before trading closed at three.

The surprise was as complete as it was pitiless. In the newspaper offices where the headlines "Wheat at a Dollar Forty, a Further Rise Certain To-day," topped the right hand columns of the first page, the financial writers now knew—as everyone now knew—that Gideon Nash had been gathering this storm for weeks, had been secretly preparing it for months.

As they realized what must have been the tremendous strain of his long-con-



She had opened the window and disappeared within the house

tinued, absolutely concealed gathering of tens of millions after tens of millions of liabilities, waiting for this day upon which he gave them the power of assets, the newspaper men stared with incredulity at the stolid photograph of the brush-haired, stubby figure of Gideon Nash, snapped as he left the Board of Trade that afternoon.

Those who had seen him reported that though now they were able to look for it, there was as little sign upon him of the long liability to total ruin at any moment as there was mark upon him of the

fact that he had made twenty millions that day and possessed the certain power of exacting twenty more to-morrow.

He gave no sign.

So it was with no illusion that they could influence the conduct of Gideon Nash that the newspaper men, explaining the totally artificial, "created" condition of the market, sought for adjectives to describe the effect upon the

public of this one man's power for greed. It was not for Nash's sympathy that the reporters wrote slowly and carefully the columns which told the story of the deaths of the three men already ruined and disgraced and unable to survive their failures. The reporters held no illusions about Gideon Nash.

No one held illusions after seeing him—least of all Esther Giles, the twenty-two year old daughter of Rutherford Giles, who had survived ruin that day but was the first of those facing it upon the resumption of trading in the morning.

Without her father's knowledge, she had called young Peyton Lombard to take her to see Gideon Nash. Together they had said to him all that could have been said. They knew he understood that he would kill Rutherford Giles, his neighbor, as surely as he forced the ruin of him and of his friends involved with him. Gideon Nash had replied by pointing them to the door. Lombard could do no more, then, than to take the girl home. He walked back, slowly, along the lake shore.

He lived next door to Gideon Nash, in the suburban country place built upon the bluffs over the lake twenty-five miles north of Chicago. As he reached Nash's house again, it was midnight; but the trader in wheat was not yet in bed. The lighted window in the rear of the house was his bed-room.

It was not Gideon Nash's usual sleeping-apartment, Peyton knew. That was at the front of the great house, a large room with three wide windows looking out toward the road; this was a small room with a single window which looked out over the edge of the bluff to the lake. Gideon Nash's family was in Europe. The wheat-trader was alone in the house with his man Foley.

Peyton likewise was alone in his father's house, a hundred yards north across the lawns. That week he had visiting him an English friend, Torrington, with whom Peyton had hunted in Uganda the year before. Peyton went up to the room where Torrington was sprawled in a chair by the window, his long, lanky form in pongee pajamas.

The room happened to be in the wing which commanded Gideon Nash's lighted window. Torrington's light was out; enough moonlight came in to let him find siphons, bottles and ice upon the stand beside him.

"Well, Peyt?" he asked, as his host tramped in. "What luck?"

"What do you really think of me, Tommie?" Peyton returned, looking down at his tall, strong form in the moonlight. "Can you beat me for peacefulness and decorum? Can you beat all of us Twentieth Century Americans? Over there"—he pointed to the lighted window in the next house—"is the man that almost doubled the price of bread to-day—he'll have it doubled to-morrow. What my neighbor's doing to us makes what you blamed bally Britishers tried to put over on us as harmless as playing marbles for keeps. We revolted for far less. And yet he goes to bed inside an open window with the curtain up. He knows nobody'll touch him. The people with real nerve—the rough-necks with the bombs—aren't hit directly enough. He's killed three of our sort to-day—as far as the evening papers had the census. He'll get a dozen more, probably, beginning with Rutherford Giles to-morrow morning. But he knows we're polite. Me, for instance! I'm trying to show Giles' daughter reasons why she should marry me. I know as sure as I'm standing here that that brute over there is going to do for her father to-morrow morning. He's going to fix him, Tommie; he's going to fix old Rutherford Giles forever. And I protest by calling upon him with Esther and ask him to please not to."

"What ought we do with him?" Torrington inquired.

"Anything to keep him off the floor—the Board of Trade—till eleven o'clock to-morrow morning—till half past ten would do. If we made him only a quarter of an hour late, and he was out of communication with his brokers, that would be enough. A quarter of an hour late without explanation and without orders from him, and his corner will be smashed—and the decent men on the floor saved!"



The girl was coming back toward them. For an instant they saw her figure before the glow at the head of the stairs

"Well?" the English guest asked. "What?"

"Exactly—what? He belongs to an age of argument by murder or kidnaping, and that's barred for us. Esther wouldn't marry me even if the jury let me off and she knew I did it for her father. He's not assailable by any other sort of argument. He hasn't a weak spot—for his purposes. He hasn't a weak spot."

"I shouldn't say he's too entirely trustful of your manners, however," Torrington observed, quietly. "He's not only shifted his diggings from the front of the house to this one-windowed nook of his at the back, but now he's barring himself in, isn't he?"

"Barring himself in?"

Torrington fumbled among his bags on the floor and arose with binoculars. He focused them upon the window in which, Peyton now observed, the curtain had been drawn. The light still burned in the room so the bars of the grating, which had been drawn over the window, showed in clear black squares, dividing the yellow glow on the curtain. The light in the room then went out; the curtain was raised. Peyton took the binoculars. Through them he could see, in the soft shimmer of the moon, the bars of the grating over the window.

"It must be hinged and swung over from the inside," Peyton observed.

"He's got a guard down there, too!" Torrington pointed to a figure standing under a tree twenty yards from Gideon Nash's window.

Peyton shifted his glasses.

"Get dressed, Tommie," he bade, abruptly. "That's not a guard; that's a girl." He started from the room.

"Who? What? Do you mean—"

Peyton returned. "Perhaps we'd better watch for a minute more." He came back and stood at the window. Torrington pulled his clothes on swiftly.

"I'm going down, now. You can come if you want to, Tommie; you may be needed. She's at the window—trying to open it."

Tommie sprang after him. The girl had been upon the low, wide porch at the end of Gideon Nash's house, as they

left the room; before they came out upon the lawn, she had opened the window at which she had been working, and disappeared within the house. They crossed the lawn and looked into the window. Already, she had cleared the passage inside. They entered and, following her by the doors she had left open behind her, they heard her in the upper hall. She gave no sign of having heard them. All the doors from the rooms opening into the upper hall were closed. It was absolutely dark except for the least possible glint at the top of the front stairs, from the moonlight through the big, curtained windows below. Even after a moment had accustomed them to the dark, neither could make out the form of the girl whom they followed. But they could hear her feeling her way along the side of the wall on which lay the door of Gideon Nash's room. She seemed to stop at each door and feel of it carefully; but she made no effort to open any of them, or even to turn the knob.

She reached another door; in the silence there came the sound of her hand over the frame; then, after an instant, came the click of a key in the lock.

Peyton strained, for a moment, to hear the rasp of the door opening or to see the glow into the hall from a moonlit room. But he heard and saw nothing. He felt for Torrington in the blackness beside him and put his lips against his guest's ear.

"That's Gideon Nash's room," he whispered.

"I thought so," Tommie answered. "The thing is, she didn't put that key in that lock. It was there—outside the door. She just turned it."

"Yes, that's it," Peyton breathed. The girl, without attempting to open the door she had unlocked, was coming back toward them. For an instant they saw her figure in dim silhouette before the dimly reflected glow at the head of the stairs. She descended. As they crept forward to keep her in sight, they saw her go directly to the front door, unlock it, open it silently—perhaps half a foot—then close it and lock it again. With a jerk of relief, which told almost

audibly that she had finished that part, she turned about and made, less carefully, for the window at which she had entered.

The two upstairs followed her. She was through the window again well ahead of them and had gained the front of the house before they came out. She stopped under a tree by the front door and stood watching it. The door remained closed; all the west front of the house, dark and indistinct in the green moon-shadow, was silent. Beyond closed the circle of elm and maple which half hid the house from the road. There was no sound on land; from the lake behind the house came only the softened sound of the exhaust of a far-away motor-boat.

Peyton advanced to the girl, boldly, his guest following him. Peyton grasped her arm, steadying her. She was trembling violently.

"Then it was you inside there?" she asked. "It was you?"

Torrington saw a slender, young little figure, and a fair, sensitive face. The features were straight and good and palely delicate in the moonlight. She was of medium height but beside Peyton she seemed small; her hands, which were ungloved, were slight.

"You heard us inside?" Peyton whispered.

"Just before I went down stairs."

"You kept your nerve," he approved.

"But, Esther, what—"

"Who is he?" she interrupted.

"He's Torrington—the Englishman that shot with me in Uganda last year. Remember? Tommie, this is Miss Giles."

The girl gave Torrington her hand. It was wet and cold with nervousness. He spoke to her, formally.

"He's got to come out!" she informed Torrington, in reply. "He was locked in by Foley, just as Ingal said. He was locked in and there's been sand in his bed every morning for the week Ingal was there—wet sand. Wet sand! He's got to come out, soon!"

Torrington dropped her hand, looking his perplexity to Peyton.

"What did you say, Esther?" Peyton demanded. "What do you mean?"

"That he's got to have a weak spot. I said so. He must have! He has! After I sent you back, Ingal—our new maid, who used to work here—told me about that: I mean the sand in his bed every morning. Then she found Foley locked him in his room. So I guessed he walked. When there's a long, secret strain on a person and he doesn't show it, he often walks. Ruth Grenwick's aunt did it; and nobody knew it for a long time. They found it out from sand in her bed in the mornings, too. She used to walk on the lake shore. But we must keep still—we must keep still. What time is it?"

Tommie showed her his watch. She read the time, mechanically, in the moonlight. "Half past seven," she repeated, without recognition.

Peyton shook his head at Tommie to prevent him from speaking. He took hold again of Esther's arm.

"Tommie always keeps his watch London time wherever he is," he explained. "It's half past one."

"Half past one," she repeated. "I think he's coming! He's coming!"

The others had heard no sound; there was no light from within the house; but the lock of the front door had turned, for the door opened. No light from within followed the opening of the door. It made only a darker gap above the steps; then appeared the figure of a man—the muscular, stubby, brush-haired figure of Gideon Nash, with paunch rather too prominent in pajamas, with thick forearms and hands protruding from the sleeves, with feet bare.

He proceeded steadily down the walk, and turned toward the beach.

"He does it! He does it!" the girl repeated.

"Yes," Peyton said, very gently. "Now, what were you going to do with him?"

"I don't know," she admitted. "I don't know. I wasn't sure that he did it!"

"Of course not," Peyton answered. "He's going toward the beach now; if there's been sand in his bed, of course, he must usually have gone that way." He was following, drawing Esther with him. Torrington came behind.



Tommie and Esther had caught up with Gideon Nash and were walking alongside him

Gideon Nash ahead, alone, reached the wooden steps by which one descended the bluff to the beach. The bluff there was perhaps seventy feet high.

Esther sprang forward.

"He'll fall and be hurt. He'll fall!" she whispered, as Peyton restrained her.

"You forget. They look out for themselves all right, on steps and things of that sort. He'll get down all right."

"But he musn't get back! He musn't get back by to-morrow morning!"

"Of course not," Peyton said. He turned to Torrington. "He's walking in

his sleep—you understand, Tommie? Well, we're going to take him where he can't get back by ten o'clock to-morrow morning. We can't tell when he'll wake up. What did Ruth Grenwick's aunt do, Esther?"

The three were descending the steps—Peyton leading, Esther following him. Nash had reached the beach and was walking along it at the water's edge. The lake was absolutely calm. The moon shimmered upon it in a path of silver. The motor-boat, whose exhaust they had heard on the lawns, had passed beyond sight, as well as out of sound. Far out, and a little to the north, shone the yellow masthead light and the green starboard lantern of a freight steamer bound for Chicago. Far up the beach a turning light-house lamp gleamed and darkened and gleamed and darkened and gleamed again, slowly, steadily.

"She never woke up till the usual time in the morning—unless something happened to wake her," Esther informed the others, in whispers. "The family watched her, after they found out that she walked. She'd be gone from bed different lengths of time and go different distances; but, unless something happened of the sort to wake her, she stayed asleep till she got back to bed. She always got back there when they left her alone. When they led her to some place she couldn't get out of, she'd lie down and get back to regular sleep—heavy sleep. Then she'd wake up in the morning without knowing at all what she'd done. She'd been under a strain which she didn't show—like him!" She nodded ahead to the wheat trader.

"What sort of things waked her up?" Peyton asked. They were following Gideon Nash along the beach. "Or rather, what didn't?"

"You could guide her, without waking her up—but not oppose her. You could talk to her and she'd answer—but you couldn't argue."

Peyton glanced ahead, quickly. Gideon Nash was passing the boat house where Peyton kept his motor-boat.

"I have it. Tommie, catch up with our neighbor and be nice to him. Get him back to the boathouse in five min-

utes without waking him up. Esther, you better go along with him. Tommie isn't too deeply decorated with tact."

"You could give her a part—I mean, you could make her think she was a certain person or doing a certain thing, and she'd answer in character," Peyton heard Esther explaining to Torrington, as the three went as far as the boathouse together. "—That is, if she wasn't already thinking she was somebody else or doing something else, when you suggested it to her. She could see people and things but wouldn't always know them."

Peyton unlocked his boat-house, threw the padlock from his motor-boat and started the engine. He brought the boat out beside the pier. A couple of hundred yards up the beach, Tommie and Esther had caught up with Gideon Nash, and were walking alongside him. They were trying to turn him, but unsuccessfully. Another pier ran out from the shore a couple of hundred yards beyond them. Peyton skimmed his boat swiftly up to it; and the other two had no trouble guiding Gideon Nash's steps out upon the pier.

"There's your flagship, admiral!" Tommie pointed out the lights of the freight-steamer to Gideon Nash. "Here's your launch to take you to it."

"Salute!" Peyton whispered to Tommie, himself standing and saluting.

Gideon Nash acknowledged their salute stiffly, and stepped into the stern of the boat. Torrington and Esther followed.

"He's in," Tommie announced, triumphantly, as the boat shot into the lake.

"So I observed," Peyton acknowledged. "Bonehead, we can't put him aboard that boat. But we've got to make for it, now."

"Where were you going to take him?"

Peyton answered with a spurt of speed. It was a perfect night for speed. The air was soft and warm over the water and as still as upon the lawns above the bluffs. The sky was clear, shining silver from the moon. The deep, blue waters were absolutely quiet and smooth, with a surface that, before the bow, seemed fragile and splitting; while

astern it was firm, cohesive, to give push to the propeller. The incessant staccato of the exhaust, which was at once accepted by the sleeping man, seemed as undisturbing in nature as the sound of the following froth. Observing this, Peyton gradually increased speed till the stem pointed higher and higher and began to rush clear of the water as the screw fought deeper and deeper for its thrust. The whirlpool at the stern seemed to rise above the stern-deck, but the boat leaped ever more quickly forward from under it.

Peyton felt Esther beside him. Gideon Nash remained stiffly in the stern, staring ahead. Torrington watched him silently.

"Where are we going?" the girl asked Peyton, nervously.

Peyton evaded.

"We're hitting it up toward twenty-two miles now. I think I can whip it up to twenty-six without splashing him. That might wake him."

"Where are you taking him? What are you going to do, Peyton?"

They had approached near to the freighter, which was about four miles out from shore.

"We can't take him there, of course. We don't want them even to see us close." He shifted his course so as to pass well astern, and turned in his seat, calling to Tommie and Gideon Nash. "That's not your flag-ship, after all, admiral. It must be further out, somewhere."

Gideon Nash nodded, solemnly; his staring, glassy eyes, which had remained steadily upon the freighter, now searched the empty moonlit waters beyond.

"It's about eighty-five miles across here, Esther," Peyton explained. "I've made it in three hours and a half. I can make it in a little over four to-night, all right—without splashing too much!"

"Peyton!"

He felt her hand over his—her little, slender fingers closing over his strong ones, in their relief. "Thanks, Esther," he murmured. "I'll fix everything without hurting him. But," he added, ordering her away, quickly, "you'd better go

back to Torrington. Nash is getting over being an admiral. He's starting something on his own account. Coach Tommie."

"Who are you?" Gideon Nash was demanding of Tommie. "Who are you?"

"Passengers!" Esther replied to him at once. "Passengers!"

"Passengers!" Nash repeated. "Then you must pay."

"Of course." Esther felt for her purse, motioning to Tommie also to prepare himself. "How much?" she asked of Gideon Nash.

"A dollar forty, of course," the sleeping man replied. "And you must pay—you must pay every cent. You can't settle for a cent less." His voice went hard and cold. "A dollar forty!"

"Of course," Esther replied. She found the change in her purse and handed it to Gideon Nash. He took it and turned to Tommie.

"I say, I've only English silver." He appealed to the girl.

"What's the Liverpool price?" she immediately asked the wheat-trader, before the difficulty could register on him.

"Five shillings, eight," the man in pajamas replied.

Tommie paid it. Gideon Nash placed the coins under the cushions on a seat, stared about the circle of the waters, doubtfully, then laid himself down upon the seat and went naturally to sleep. Torrington watched him a few moments, then left him to Esther.

"Will he stay asleep that way, now?" he asked Peyton.

"He's snoring," Peyton announced, superfluously.

"I say, what made him insist so on the dollar forty?"

"It's the price he put wheat to to-day—or yesterday, rather. You could settle in English money, of course, at the Liverpool price."

Tommie glanced with admiration toward Esther. "Quick, wasn't she?"

Peyton nodded, keeping the motor steadily to its greatest speed. The patent log beside him showed twenty-six miles an hour. Behind him, Gideon Nash—still sleeping naturally, with his mouth open—continued to snore. Esther

Giles searched in a locker and drew out a light robe. She spread it gently over him. His coarse, thick hands clutched it and, turning as he slept, he rolled himself up in it.

Torrington returned to watch beside him. Esther crept back to the place beside Peyton. Torrington refrained from watching ahead. Peyton held the boat to her course with one hand and closed

about him. She told me about the sand in his bed, and how queerly he acted when she told him—and how Foley locked him in the next night. So I—”

“Then, why didn’t you send for me, at once. Why didn’t you let me know?”

“I didn’t know myself. I came to find out. I remembered about Ruth Grenwick’s aunt—how there had been sand in her bed. I couldn’t think of anything



He kissed her lips; then she sank back again. But she did not sleep; she rested awake, but with eyes closed most of the time

his other around both of Esther’s.

“We’re past the middle of the lake,” he said.

She looked up at him and drew nearer. He drew her close against him. “How did you know this, Esther?” he asked.

“I knew he must have a weak spot. I knew it! After I sent you home and I heard father in his room, I thought about Ingal having been in his house just before she came to us. I asked her

before I found out. Then I was going to call you!”

“I see,” he said, simply.

“He will not be on the floor when trading starts to-day?” she asked mechanically.

“No.” Peyton stroked her cheek. “He will not be on the floor—or in communication either.”

“Yes,” she murmured, faintly. “Yes; I understand. I understand.”

He thought, as he held all her little weight now, and felt her strong little figure quite nerveless, that she had fainted. He bent his head and kissed her forehead and then her lips. It roused her, but she made no resistance. He kissed her lips again—and hers met his. Then she sank back again. But she did not sleep; too tired and spent for sleep, she rested awake, but with eyes closed most of the time.

The moon began to fade; a fresher whiteness suffused the eastern sky. Slowly, it showed in the horizon the high dunes and white beach of the Michigan shore. Gradually details could be made out. A little to the north a small pier extended out from a beach before dunes behind which appeared houses.

Peyton steered for this, slowing his motor easily. The girl on his shoulder roused and sat up, patting her hair and adjusting her clothes. The deep grunting snores of Gideon Nash continued unbroken. Torrington crept from beside him to Peyton.

"What are you going to do, now?"

"Put him ashore," Peyton replied. "They are kind, simple fisher-people right here along this shore. And just a little farther back, there are very practical, careful small farmers—raising tomatoes, I think. Of course, they won't believe him when he tells them he's Gideon Nash, so we can count upon them being decently humane to him. They'll give him breakfast and clothing, maybe. You see, he knows he walks in his sleep, but he can't remember anything that happens to him. So when he comes to and tells them he's Gideon Nash and accounts for his presence here in pajamas by explaining that he just wandered over here from Illinois in his sleep, I figure that the tomato-raisers will take care of him till ten, anyway. We've only got to get away with ourselves and the boat—Miss Giles and I. He knows us. So you've got to carry him ashore, Tommie, and stick around till he wakes up to see he's all right. He's never seen you."

As he spoke he steered the boat softly against the pier. "Tommie!" He

pointed in command, and then added: "Join us in New York afterward—Regis."

Esther seemed not to sense what he said. Tommie hesitated only a moment.

There was no one in sight on the shore. The sun was just beginning to show itself. Torrington bent, obediently, and straightened up with the robe-wrapped form of the snoring man in his arms. He stepped carefully upon the pier, carried Gideon Nash the length of it and laid him, still sleeping heavily, down upon the sands. Then Tommie turned and waved his hand. Peyton pushed off and pointed the boat out.

"My blessings," Tommie called, cautiously, from the end of the pier. Peyton looked to Esther. She faced him directly, without flushing. "I heard him," she said. "Also what you said to him about New York."

"Us?" Peyton asked.

She nodded.

"It's the only way for us to explain skipping with the boat to-night," he said. "Then it's all right?"

She nodded again. So, for a few moments, the boat steered badly—very badly. Soon, however, it skimmed straight and swift to that Michigan port, where pastors wait upon the piers for the Chicago boats.

Accordingly, in the afternoon newspapers which "extra-ed" all over Chicago the news of the wild collapse of the wheat corner, following the disappearance of Gideon Nash, was an item in the society columns, which recorded that Esther Giles, the daughter of Rutherford Giles, had eloped to St. Joe and there married Mr. Peyton Lombard, whose family were all in Europe.

There was in the same editions another item which told in a humorous paragraph how a lunatic in pajamas had been found upon the beach by truck-farmers near Petrony, claiming to be Gideon Nash.

It had been necessary to bind him hand and foot, because of the violent persistence of his delusion that he must communicate, instantly, with the Chicago wheat pit.

Grandmother

"So small and so unassuming was she,
that the house seemed just about the
same with her as it had without"

By ETHEL TRAIN

Author of "A Social Highwayman," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY HANSON BOOTH

I WONDER when they'll come in?" thought Grandmother Estabrook. She was known as Grandmother Estabrook in contradistinction to Grandmother Phipps, who lived over the way in a house of her own. Grandmother Estabrook lived with her son. It was many years now since his wife, bustling, large, energetic, with a sense of duty as pronounced as the designs on her dresses, had taken the quiet, little old lady into their home. "Your mother's getting too feeble to live alone, John," she had said, with decision. "If anything happened to her, I declare I could never hold up my head again."

John had not thought of his mother as feeble. She had always seemed to him particularly vigorous. Moreover, it was beyond his powers of imagination to picture his wife with her head bowed under any circumstances; but then, no circumstance could possibly arise to the frustration of whose evil design to humiliate her she would prove unequal. Her manner of assuming this incumbency had filled him with admiration. "My, but Mommer's a good woman!" he had thought and had forthwith forgotten her goodness.

So small and so unassuming was his mother that the house seemed just about the same with her as it had without. There was one bedroom less, to be sure, for she "took up" a good, big, airy one, and the carrying of trays on occasions when it was decreed better for her not to come down, undeniably made extra work for the servant, but these inconveniences were after all not exorbitant pay for a serene conscience.

"See that Mrs. Estabrook's meals are hot," the old lady sometimes heard her daughter-in-law instructing a new maid-of-all-work in her throaty voice. "Mr. Estabrook is very particular about his mother."

"Yes, ma'am," was the impressed response; and the latest incumbent spent the first month in expectation of evidences of this particularity, which were not forthcoming. When she began to suspect that the head of the house had been used as a boggy to frighten her with, there was apt to be a lowering of the temperature of the viands, and her mistress, whom nothing escaped, would find it necessary to resort to some fresh subterfuge. She was a naturally truthful woman, but had got into this habit in bringing up her children, of whom there

were three—Mame, Tom, and Linda, all full grown now, and beyond her simple ruses.

Regularly, once a year, the family physician was had in to look Grandmother Estabrook over. His report never varied. "You're wonderful!" he always said, with professional enthusiasm. "Arteries as soft as a baby's; heart-action as regular as the clock; eyesight excellent. You don't need me except in a friendly way!"

John's wife was always present at these visits. "That's because mother gets such good care," she would say, with her wide smile. And the little old lady had become firmly imbued with the idea that it was care alone which accounted for the condition of her organs.

Business occupied almost the whole of Mr. Estabrook's time. He had a hearty, breezy way of calling out, "Well, Mother!" if the latter happened to be of the family group when he came in, and then turning his attention to some one else—either Mame, sitting in absorbed conversation with a young man on the sofa, or Tom, reading in a cloud of cigarette smoke, or Linda, dreaming. Linda hated embroidery; she never opened a book in the crowded, social atmosphere of the sitting room; amid its crude activities, her figure and that of her grandmother were the two points of rest and order. One held the repose of age, for which there are no surprises; the other that of youth, full of a hushed expectancy.

Grandmother Estabrook had been in her room all that raw March day. She had a little cold, and the halls were draughty; her daughter-in-law had said that she was better off here than anywhere. The morning had passed very well; it had not seemed long to her; she had read her Bible in the intervals of knitting, and had gently enjoyed her coal fire, once it had reached the comfortable, glowing stage. Often, too, a step had paused in the corridor; her hearing was unimpaired, and she knew the footfall of everyone in the house.

"That's Bridget," she had murmured, taking account of the soft, flat flop of

the maid's old shoes, like frogs seeking shelter. "And that's Mame!" as a sharp, short tread hurried along. "And Linda!" as she heard a light step, deliberate, but not slow. She wished that the children would stop oftener. Time was, when no persuasion would have dragged them by her door. But they were no longer children; she was always forgetting that. It was so easy to forget it, with her brain still full of the stories to which they had used to listen, rapt, devouring eyes on her face! Sometimes she said them over half aloud, shame-faced because of her pleasure in them, laughing to herself or wiping away a tear. She had always enjoyed them as much as the children! Now, they read to themselves books whose very titles mystified her; if she looked into them, she found them full of modern instances which she did not understand.

The morning was over. But not the afternoon—alas! not the afternoon! How still it was in all the house. No steps now. Even Bridget was enjoying her few moments of leisure in her attic. And the children had gone out. Her son and his wife were with them, but that did not matter as much. John had traveled so far from the East that his mother had well nigh forgotten those far distant days when she had mended his jackets and watched over his feverish nights. A new generation had come between! Her arms were empty now, but her heart was theirs who had been the last to make demands upon it. None of them had died, yet there was one who sat, with folded hands, a mourner beside three little graves.

It was growing late. Grandmother Estabrook took down first one foot, then the other, from the polished brass fender; then she moved with tiny steps and contracted shoulders to the window, pulled up the shade with her white hand that showed hollows between the veins, and peered into the raw twilight. A snowflake or two had begun to fall; she watched their contortions as they spun round and round, feathery acrobats, fluttering out of sight.

Grandmother Estabrook's memory began to play tricks with her. It had worn

her well, that memory. But she could not always depend on it when she was alone and thinking. She fancied herself a child, in striped stockings and a checked frock cut low at the neck, standing, tip-toe on a hassock covered with carpet, and flattening her nose against the cold pane. The child's hair fell straight over her shoulders; her hands were locked in an agony of impatience; her bosom heaved. It was hours and hours since her mother had gone out, kissing her in a preoccupied, matter-of-fact way. She had let her go so lightly, hardly looking up from the little handkerchief she was hemstitching, to return the kiss! But that had been in bright daylight, with the cheerful sunshine pouring in on them both. Now, it was dark, quite dark; she was all alone and her mother had not come home. Had her mother been disappointed in that leave-taking? She wondered, sad at heart. How she would greet her to make up for it! Never, never again would she be satisfied with so brief a good-by. Oh, if her mother would only come!

The little blue horse-car that should bring her was approaching from down the street, with joyous tinkle of bell. She could watch it from afar, by means of a small mirror that was affixed to the outside of the window for that very purpose. Dear, significant little car, that held a mother inside! As it drew nearer, the beating of her heart nearly deafened her. Now—now it must begin to slow up! But it did not slow up. It went on, with mocking tinkle that diminished and was lost.

Two more cars she watched, with hope slowly freezing to despair. Something had surely befallen her mother, else she would never have been deserted like this. Blankly she viewed the coming of the fourth car. Before she knew what was happening, it had stopped dead! Arms full of packages, her mother was getting out, politely assisted by the conductor. With a great shout the little girl flew down the stair, tore open the front door, threw her arms around that beloved neck, smelled the smell of her mother's bonnet.

Suddenly, with loud reverberation, a door banged somewhere in the house. Grandmother Estabrook started, passed her hand across her eyes, drew down the shade hastily and went back to her chair. Presently, the dreadful silence was broken—instantly annihilated by voices, human voices, chatting and laughing outside. Grandmother Estabrook's face was transformed in a moment from an old face, pitifully smooth in its patience, to a face in which the red flicker from the hearth revealed something of the fire of youth. It had come, her moment of the day. There they were, the children, all three, visiting her according to established custom before tea. Tom and Mame spent but a moment at her side; it was Linda who lingered, with two jacketed arms around her and a cool cheek pressing hers.

"I'm all snow!" the girl cried, repentant, the next instant. "I'd no business to come near you!" She jumped up, pulled off the jacket, threw it down with her muff and gloves on a chair, sank on her knees on the hearth-rug, clasped her hands in the old lady's silken lap and looked up at her. "How's your cold?" she asked, solicitously.

Grandmother Estabrook had forgotten all about her cold. But being reminded of it, she considered the question, conscientiously.

"I think it's a little better," she said, doubtfully. "I feel pretty well."

"Of course you do!" cried Linda. "And you're coming down to supper. You must come down, because Elmer's going to stay. Elmer's waiting for me now, in the sitting room. I've got to go."

Grandmother Estabrook glowed all over; it was summer in her heart. Elmer was downstairs, yet Linda had stayed with her these many minutes! They kissed, and the girl picked up her belongings.

"You'll come?" she repeated.

"Yes," was the eager response. "As you want me, I think I may venture. That is, if your mother approves."

Seated at the supper table an hour and a half later, she looked happily across at her granddaughter and Elmer, acknowledged lovers, side by side. The

girl's hair had darkened with years—the curls that Grandmother Estabrook had delighted to twist over her fingers, smoothing themselves into bright brown locks, with a crinkle here and there. Her features, slightly irregular, were charming; even the nose, which she had knocked against a doll carriage the year she was four, and tilted the least little bit out of line, had nearly straightened. How she had cried! Her grandmother remembered. And no wonder! It was but yesterday that she had comforted the baby whom Time had slyly spirited away, substituting this beautiful young girl. Elmer, with his smooth, fair hair, his ruddy cheeks, his clear blue eyes, was every inch the good young man. With such a wife, his future was assured. It was best to marry young, with your life before you. They would be married soon, and she might live to see—shyly she shrank back from the thought. Even her innocent and pure mind dared not touch a possibility so sacred.

At the head of the table sat her son John, healthy, but wrinkled and yellow as a result of his sedentary life. The supper table groaned under the fruits of his industry, but whatever was in him of decision he left at his office every night, turning the key upon it. Here at home, Mommer reigned supreme.

Presently the engaged couple began to whisper together.

"Elmer's got an invitation for you," announced Linda, after a moment. "Wait till you hear!"

An expectant silence fell.

"There's a real good show coming to town next Wednesday," began the young man, "on its way to Springfield, Ohio. I want you all to come, every one of you! It's Tillie Fotheringay in 'When the Cat's Away.' I'll get a box."

"Well, well," commented Mommer. "I guess I'm too old for those shows."

A shout of protest arose.

"Not a bit of it!" said Popper, gallantly.

"Maybe my blue silk would do," his wife rejoined, meditatively. "Mame! Shall I wear my blue silk?"

Mame nodded, knowing that what her



Elmer was putting on his coat. "Don't forget Wednesday. I'd better give Linda the whole six tickets"

mother sought was not advice, but sympathy.

"That old theatre's a regular barn," she said. "I should think it was just about time we had a new one."

"If it only don't catch on fire the night we go!" worried her mother.

"It wont," Linda soothed her. Into the girl's roseate consciousness the thought of catastrophe could not enter.

"No wonder the good companies don't make but one night stands," said Elmer.

"My! I'd like to hit Broadway, New York, for a week!"



Grandmother Estabrook was counting. One, Linda; two, Elmer; three, her son John; four, his wife; five, Mame; six, Tom. She counted it over seven times. "It always comes out the same," she said aloud, and sank into her arm chair

Linda clapped her hands. "Wouldn't it be great?" she cried.

"Maybe we will some time," said her lover, looking at her with admiring eyes.

Of their conversation Grandmother Estabrook heard not a word, for she was completely absorbed by the astonishing fact that she was about to go out to a place of amusement for the first time in twenty years. The manner of the invitation had pleased her, for it had not been calculated to raise up the barrier of self consciousness that generally stood between her and the rest of the world.

She was going, and nothing was being made of it! She was merely included. Her mind projected itself forward. Curiously, as though from the orchestra below, she was looking up at the box which held them, son, daughters, parents, prospective son-in-law, and in the back-ground, a quiet, black-clad figure with white hair. She saw herself, not according to the habit of her life, from within, but for the first time in perspective, as one indispensable to the completion of that happy family party. In the midst of her happiness, she

prayed that there might be among the audience no lonely ones in whom the contemplation of that group would awaken a hunger of the heart; if any such there should be, she hoped they would read it in her face that she would willingly be grandmother to them all, and thus be comforted.

Grandmother Estabrook spent the evening in the sitting-room, amid smoke, noise and laughter, declining her daughter-in-law's suggestion that she go upstairs with an unwonted firmness that did not lead that portly individual to repeat it. About ten o'clock Elmer arose.

"Well, I must be going," he announced.

"What's your hurry?" asked Tom, the rake, looking up sideways, cigarette in mouth.

"Don't go!" was Mame's amiable contribution.

"No, don't," Popper upheld her.

"It's early yet," added Mommer.

Linda and Grandmother Estabrook looked on with smiles—formalities were not expected of them.

Elmer was already out in the hall, putting on his heavy coat.

"Don't forget Wednesday," he said, coming back, with his arms half in the coat. "I guess I can get the box to-morrow. I'd better stop in and give Linda the whole six tickets, as long's I'm coming here to supper. I might leave 'em around the office, or something, if I kept them. Good-night!"

The door banged. Tom arose, stretched himself and threw the end of his cigarette into the fire.

"Well, I guess I'll go to bed," he said.

"We're all going," replied his mother. "Just poke that fire, Popper, so's it'll fall to pieces. There! It can't do any harm now."

"Take my arm, mother!" said John, and he escorted the old lady up the stairs with a vague, impersonal touch on her sleeve. "Hope you'll sleep well," he said perfunctorily at the door, and departed.

Grandmother Estabrook hardly heard him; she was counting. One, Linda; two, Elmer; three, her son John; four,

his wife; five, Mame; six, Tom. She counted it over seven times.

"It always comes out the same," she said, aloud, and sank into her arm-chair. "I didn't know anything about those boxes," she thought, with a wry little smile. "It's so long since I've been. I didn't know but they might have a dozen seats in one of those boxes."

The fire smoldered low, and still she sat on, thinking, far into the night. Suddenly she got up, and to the gleam of the half-burned coals her eyes flashed an answering spark. Then she undressed quickly, and put out the gas.

"He said 'all,'" she murmured, from under her quilt. "'Every one of you,' is what he said." Her resentment was the terrible resentment of the deprecating and the shy.

When the Wednesday came, Linda burst into her grandmother's room, her young dignity and poise thrown to the winds.

"Only an hour more to wait," she beamed. "Supper'll be ready in a minute. Come along down, Grandma, dear."

Grandmother Estabrook drew her white, woolly shawl closer about her shoulders. Her look was almost furtive.

"I don't think I'll come," she said. "I think I won't come down to-night."

"Oh, Grandma, why not?" asked Linda, in her sweet way, trying to keep the preoccupation out of her voice. "Well, anyway, you must tell me whether I look all right. Do I?"

She turned about as if on a pivot, that she might display herself on all sides, and then ran off happily. Left alone, Grandmother Estabrook huddled herself in the big shawl until it threatened to obliterate her completely, and waited for her tray to be brought in. After Bridget had appeared, deposited it upon the table, and stumped off to other duties downstairs, a strange thing happened. Grandmother Estabrook went to the door, locked it, and drew out the key. Then, with a decided motion, she threw off the shawl, which slid to the ground, a discarded disguise. And lo! there stood revealed a winsome little figure of an old lady, dressed in its best, with real lace at

sleeves and neck, and among the folds the brave flash of a small diamond. Presently, she went to the closet with stiff rustle of silk, and got out a wrap. She laid this on the bed, opened a drawer of her bureau, and extracted a black Spanish lace scarf that was lying in readiness on top.

"I'd rather wear my bonnet," she muttered, regretfully, as she unfolded it, "but they don't wear bonnets nowadays. I musn't be behind the times."

She stepped to her mirror and regarded herself carefully. There was no one to tell her whether she looked all right, but she believed that, on the whole, she did. When she was satisfied, she picked up the shawl, put it on again and unlocked the door.

"I hope that hack wont come too soon," she thought, fearfully. "I told Mr. Richards especially not to drive up till they'd gone."

It seemed to her that they were unconscionably long at supper. Restlessly, she went over to her bureau again, and from one of the little drawers at the side got out an envelope. She opened this, with nervous fingers, and pulled therefrom six blue tickets. Taking off the elastic band, she shuffled them like cards, after which she put them back, laying the envelope upon her wrap on the bed. With infinite relief she heard, at last, the expected sounds of departure—the diminishing tramp of feet. The family were going to take the car, but Grandmother Estabrook had ordered for her purposes a two-horse hack.

Bridget, humming to herself, as she swept the dishes from the table, came perilously near dropping an armful of them with a crash, so astonishing a sight met her eyes when, happening to look into the hall, she beheld through the stalks of pussy willows, which had formed the center decoration, the form of Grandmother Estabrook, soft and furry as these little harbingers of spring, hurrying along toward the door. Bridget set the pile of crockery down and met her just as a white-gloved hand was reaching out toward the knob. Arms akimbo, she stood and engulfed the old lady in an ecstasy of contemplation.

"Well, Bridget!" said Grandmother Estabrook.

This was all that Bridget needed.

"Sure, Mrs. Estabrook," she replied, "I did be thinkin' it was yer ghost a-walkin' down thim stairs, large as life! An' now it's yerself, an' you that bad with the rheumatics! Whatever—"

"Bridget," Grandmother Estabrook interrupted her, "I have no time to stand here and talk. Open the door, please."

Bridget could hardly believe her ears. This new tone of decision—whence came it?

"Yes'm," she mumbled. "Be careful of the steps, mum. I'll give ye a hand."

"Thank you," was the dignified reply, and the two made their way down—Bridget, reduced to silence by the imposing sight of a closed landeau, with a pair of fat bays standing, in habituated patience, heads thrust out.

Mr. Richards leaned down genially from his box.

"Evenin', Mrs. Estabrook!"

"Good-evening, Mr. Richards," Grandmother Estabrook replied. "I'm so glad there wasn't a funeral to-night! I should never have dared to ride with Mr. Hoolihan or Mr. Jones."

Mr. Richards considered. "They're good, safe drivers, though," he said, generously, "—both of 'em. I don't often have funerals Wednesday nights," he went on, "an' if I had, Mrs. Estabrook, I'd 'a' throwed it over to drive *you*."

"Oh!" exclaimed Grandmother Estabrook, gratified but shocked.

Bridget put her into the vehicle and shut the door upon her.

With a clatter of hoofs, the bays started up and moved off at a slow trot, carrying this little old, palpitating Cinderella further at every moment from the cinders of the accustomed fireside, toward the delicious terrors and excitements of the ball.

"It's too bad I couldn't have got there before the curtain went up," Grandmother Estabrook reflected, sitting bolt upright on the green cloth seat, "but there didn't seem to be any way of managing it."

They came, at last, to the small, crooked street that held the theatre, an



"Linda; what's the matter?" cried Elmer in alarm. The girl gripped her sister by the wrist and pointed with the other hand. "Look!" she said. Everyone in the party, obeying, was robbed of speech

ancient structure of yellow brick that was decked by play-bills and posters into a semblance of frivolous gaiety, like a dowager bejeweled and befrilled. The carriage door was abruptly opened, and Grandmother Estabrook shrank back at sight of a black face with gleaming eyeballs. Mr. Richard's voice reassured her.

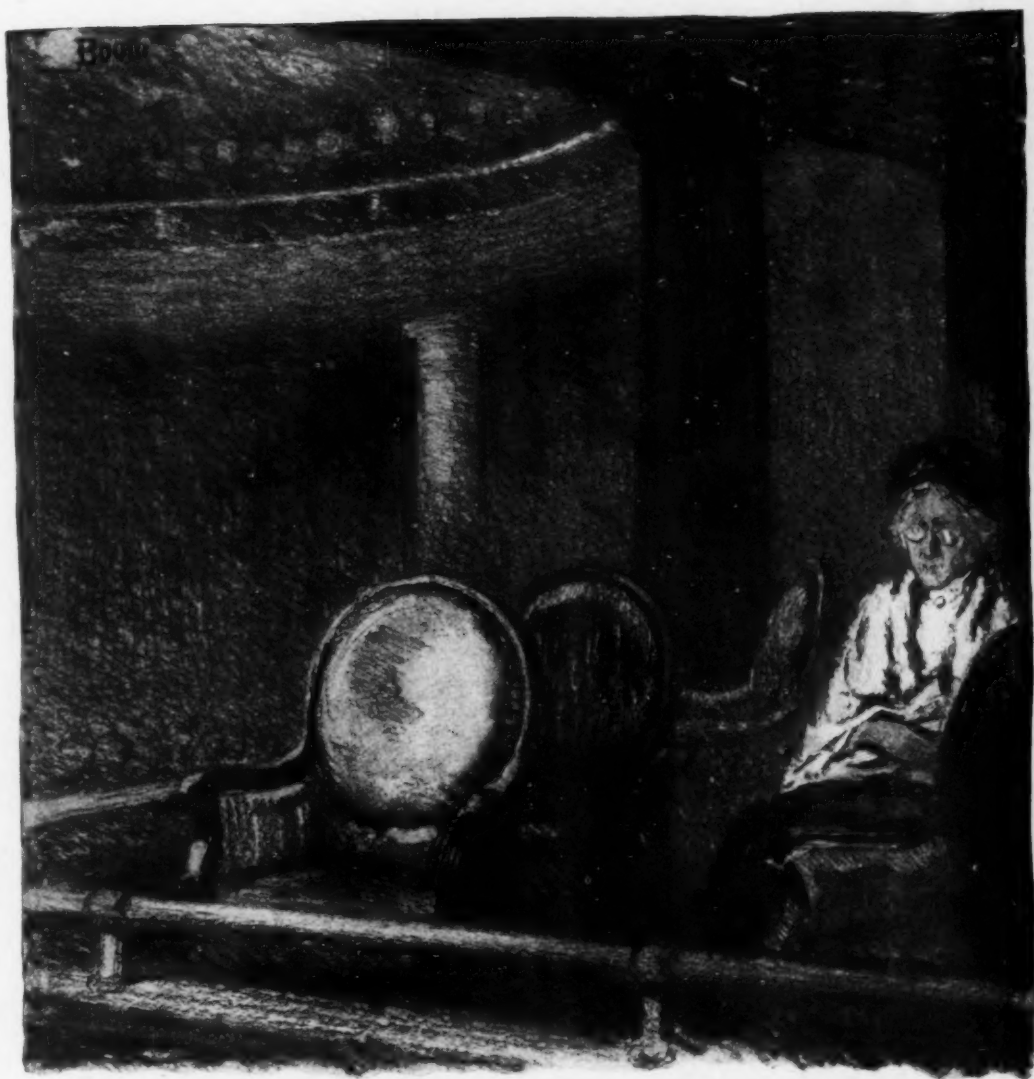
"Careful, now, Rufe!" it directed, familiarly. "Help Mrs. Estabrook out."

"All right, Ted!" replied a musical

voice. "Mind the curb, Madam." And in full confidence now, she let herself be engineered toward the entrance by the huge dorky, in a tall hat.

"Tickets, please!" said the ticket-taker, chewing gum. And in indifference, he received the six tickets she presented, handing her back the stubs.

A little bewildered, she penetrated the amphitheatre, a black space, with radiance at one end.



The box opposite had an occupant. She sat very still in her corner, and about her were the only empty seats in the house. John's wife was the first to regain her voice.

"Well I declare; I believe your mother's gone crazy"

"Seat checks!" shrilled the slim usheress in her white apron. "Kindly let me see your seat checks."

Grandmother Estabrook held them out, and the usheress, instantly creating a small, sufficient light at the end of a cylindrical instrument with which she was provided, examined them, and directed the old lady to her box.

Grandmother Estabrook's silk dress touched the cushion of the chair at the

extreme right, just as a young lady with very yellow hair, clad all in purple, was doing her turn alone upon the stage. With a killing glance over her white shoulder, she was speaking, not singing, to a lively accompaniment, a song wherein "harm" rhymed with "go on," "speak of it" with "secret," and "cry about" with "sigh about." After each stanza the singer galloped in sprightly fashion several times from one end of the stage

to the other, executing a sort of pantomime interspersed with sporadic motions of the knees and ankles.

Grandmother Estabrook looked on with the grave interest due to a receptive attitude of mind. Dramatic art had altered since her time; she must educate herself up to modern standards. And they all wore their dresses cut very low nowadays. The orchestra leader, she thought, appeared completely absorbed in the number; while wielding his baton with the greatest dexterity he glared at the musicians in a manner truly intimidating.

"She'd never be able to do it without him," Grandmother Estabrook thought. "He does stand back of her beautifully."

The vulgarity of the "show" was not apparent to her, since there was in her no answering vulgarity of soul. She was thoroughly occupied in trying to find some connection between actions and movements which to her ignorance appeared unrelated to anything.

So dark was the amphitheatre by comparison with the stage, that Grandmother Estabrook could not hope to distinguish faces among the audience, so that she did not know that her kin were seated in the box directly opposite hers, Mame and Linda in front, their mother and Tom in the middle, John and Elmer behind. The party had arrived early, determined to miss nothing, and had passed a quarter of an hour in watching the house fill.

"Look at Mrs. Sondheim!" Mrs. Estabrook cried, pronouncing it "Sun-time." "I sh'd think she might have left her veil home, if she was coming *here*."

Mame followed the direction of her mother's gaze. Mrs. Sondheim's round, innocent eyes were fixed in anticipation upon the musty curtain; her rosy face was framed in *crêpe*.

"I suppose she's got so used to it she'd feel lost without it," said Mame, indulgently. "There's Mr. Bly and the Bly girls, just coming in."

"I wonder who's got that box just across," Tom remarked. "They'll be late, whoever they are."

"They say that's fashionable, East,"

replied Linda. "Silly to do it *here*, isn't it? If I ever go to New York, I tell you I'll be beforehand every time."

Elmer, who had ears only for her, heard, and getting up, whispered over her shoulder.

"I guess we'll have to manage that New York jaunt for a wedding trip," he said, and a flush of delight crimsoned her cheek.

"Oh, Elmer," she murmured ecstatically. "I don't believe you can afford it!"

"On my *wedding trip* I can," he maintained stoutly, and resumed his seat, almost as eager to watch her pleasure as to talk to her.

"Can't be James Eaton's got that box," said Mrs. Estabrook. "Mrs. Eaton went to Piqua yesterday for a visit, and he's laid up with lumbago. Still, I don't know of anybody else that's not here already that'd feel they could *take* a box."

The rising curtain put an end to their speculation. As the act progressed, the dimple in Linda's cheek came and went continually. It was not so much the "show" that pleased her as the loud laughter of her retiring father, which burst forth at each sally, accompanied by a resounding slap of knee; and what girl that lived could be critical of the entertainment when a few yards behind her was sitting the man she loved?

There was some difficulty in getting the curtain down; it stuck half way; when it had yielded to a final jerk, all settled themselves with relieved sighs. Suddenly Linda, who was leaning forward with her elbow on the rail, her delicate chin in her hand, and her eyes roving about in a contented and casual inspection of her neighbors, sat up and turned quite white.

"Linda! What's the matter?" cried Elmer, in alarm.

The girl gripped her sister by the wrist and pointed with her other hand.

"Look!" she said.

Everyone in the party, obeying, was robbed of speech. The box opposite had an occupant. She sat very still in her corner, and about her were the only empty seats in the house. If an angel from Heaven had appeared before her in the stead of little old Grandmother

Estabrook, and had sat with folded wings quietly upon that faded red plush chair, the incongruity would have seemed to Linda hardly more apparent. Grandmother Estabrook here! Her mother, as usual, was the first to regain her voice.

"Well, I declare!" she said to her husband in breathless indignation. "I do believe your mother's gone crazy!"

John bristled. His evening had stimulated and excited him.

"She's got savings," he muttered. "I s'pose she can do as she likes."

This defense of an action so unprecedented deprived his wife of utterance.

Tom chuckled. "Bully for the old lady!" he cried. "I didn't know she was a sport."

A thousand emotions were stirring in Linda. In those two minutes she did more thinking than in the whole course of her life before.

"Grandma's not a sport, Tom," she said, in a tone that made them all listen. "She just felt"—her voice broke—"left out."

This explanation struck home. No one moved. Then Elmer, full of contrition, spoke up.

"It was all my fault. I wouldn't have done it for anything. I was a blockhead. I never dreamed she'd want to come."

Linda shook her head and got up with a soft rustle of her dress.

"It doesn't matter whose fault it was," she said. "We've got to do something right, now. I'm going over."

Elmer arose too.

"Don't come!" she ordered. "I'd rather go alone."

"Bring her back with you," said her mother. "We can squeeze her in."

Linda caught her breath. "I wish we'd thought of that before," she said.

Grandmother Estabrook, happy and absorbed as long as the house was in darkness, had shrunk into herself at the turning on of the lights. She had caught here and there a glimpse of a familiar face, and her slumbering self-consciousness had been aroused. What would people think of her family, seeing her there all alone?

"I oughtn't to have put them in that position," she reflected, forlornly. "I never ought to have come. I wish I'd asked Mr. Richards to wait," she murmured with a lump in her throat, like that of a homesick child. "Then maybe I could have got out without their seeing me. Perhaps if I went now, that colored man would get me a cab."

She forgot that she had intended them to see her; all she wanted now was to get away. Yet she sat on, a helpless prisoner, well knowing that she could never bring herself to face the dangers of any cab whatsoever. At that instant Linda stood before her; all doors of escape were closed. Her lips trembled.

"I suppose you think I'm very silly," she began.

Linda did not seem to hear.

"Well, Grandma dear," she said in her fresh, sweet voice, "how do you like it?"

The old lady was instantly restored by the matter-of-fact tone.

"Pretty well," she replied, eagerly. "I like it pretty well."

"It's not half over yet," said Linda, sinking down on one of the chairs. "There are two more acts. I'm glad, aren't you?"

"Yes," admitted her grandmother. "I *am* glad."

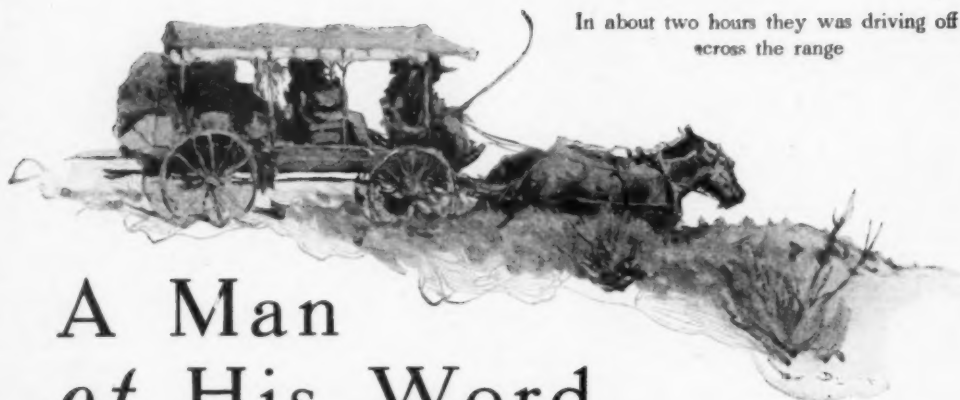
"Mother wanted me to bring you over to *our* box," the girl chatted on. "But I thought it would be more comfortable here."

The little bell rang on the stage; the lights went out; the amphitheatre was once more in shadow. All at once Grandmother Estabrook felt two arms steal around her—against her face the pressure of a contrite young cheek.

"I'm going to tell you a great secret," Linda whispered. "You must *promise* not to tell anybody at all!"

"I promise," her grandmother whispered back, trembling in response to some secret which she felt but did not understand.

"Elmer's going to take me to New York on our wedding trip," said Linda. "And, oh, Grandma! Grandma, *darling*! You've just *got* to come too!"



In about two hours they was driving off
across the range

A Man of His Word

By RALPH W. GILMAN

Author of "The Sand Wells Water Co," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY DOUGLAS DUER

THE first time I saw him," said baggageman Joe Ware, jerking his thumb," he was right about here, and it was about ten o'clock in the morning. I remember it because 104 had just gone through, and I'd taken one load of transfer stuff across to the branch line side and was coming back after the other when he bumped into me.

"What you doing, you old lumber head?" I started to holler. But when I looked up and saw who it was, I didn't. Usually you can tell after you have been about a place like this for eight or ten years, who you can holler at, and who you can't. And as soon as I got a good look at him, I saw that he belonged to the can't kind.

"I didn't mean it," I says, sticking out my hand. 'I was thinking of something else.'

"And I didn't mean it, either," he says. 'I was thinking of something else, too.' And he took my hand.

"We stood there that way for about five seconds like two strange dogs that have met on a lawn and don't know whether to sniff of one another and go

on or to stand up on their hind legs and fight. Then the fellow laughed, one of those big, hearty, out-of-door laughs that is honest as daylight.

"Ever drink?" he asks.

"Sometimes," I says, seeing that he wasn't no spotter, or fly cop. 'But it's against the rules.'

"Rules be blowed," he says. 'Come around here.'

"And we went around the corner of the depot, out of sight of the passengers.

"While we were around there, I took another good look at him. He was about six-foot-two, clean and straight as a whistling post, and had on one of those four-dent high hats, yellow khaki breeches, blue shirt, red handkerchief about his neck, and a pair of high-heeled boots with about seven or eight dollars' worth of red and yellow stitching up and down the sides. Also he wore a pistol in his belt, like the XC boys who come in here from the border with cattle, and carried a corduroy coat across his arm, with a couple of cigars and a black-backed check book sticking out of the inside pocket.

"But the thing that struck you most was his eyes. They were small, and round, and blue, and had a hard, straight way of looking at you, that made you feel that he always meant what he said, and would do what he said, if he had to go to the end of the world to do it. A man of his word. That was the way I sized him up.

"Also, I knew by the cigars, and the book, and the way he carried his coat, that he was going somewhere, and had something on his mind, and that he was the kind that was worth getting acquainted with.

"Now," he says, after he'd put the bottle away, 'I'll help you take the other truck across. Then we'll sit down and get acquainted. I haven't told you yet what I was thinking of, nor where I'm going.'

"No," I says. 'You haven't. And there isn't nobody that will be gladder to hear, and wag more tails a-listening, than just me.'

"We'll get on, then," he says, nodding his head in a pleased way. 'I'm a man of my word.'

"I believe it," I says, looking at his eyes again.

"Then we took the truck across, me pulling, and him pushing and grunting, and every once in a while clucking like a man driving a horse, and lined it up on the branch side. After that we sat down in the shade by the track, and wiped the sweat off of our heads, and went to visiting.

"Woods is my name," he says. 'Hiram Woods—though they call me, Red-Water Woods over there where I come from.' And he waved his hand toward the Nueces country.

"We stood for about five seconds like two strange dogs"



"Ware's mine," I says. 'Joe Ware, and I'm baggage and freight man.'

"Glad to meet you, Joe," he says. Then he goes on again:

"I'm a stage man. Or rather," he adds, taking one of the cigars out of his pocket and rolling it between his fingers, 'I was until last week. Since then I've been something else.'

"Sheriff, or U. S. marshal, or ranger?" I asks, looking him over again.

"No," he laughs. 'Not that. Something quite tame. You'd never guess it in a year.'

"Then you'd better tell me, and save time," I says. 'The branch train will be along in twenty minutes, and I'll have to look after that.'

"Well," he says, biting the end off of his cigar and spitting it out on the ground, 'I'm a banana farmer.'

"What!" I says.

"Yes," he says, kind of confidential, like a fellow telling you that he's going to marry the Jones girl when everybody in town has seen that they were thicker than molasses. 'I'm a banana farmer—down in Mexico. I'm on my way down there now. You wouldn't have thought it, would you?'

"No," I says, thinking of those gun-barrel blue eyes of his, 'I wouldn't. But you look like a man of your word, and I believe you. I didn't know, though, that they grew there.'

"Oh yes," he says, 'they are one of the biggest crops they have. That is, in some places. They don't grow everywhere. Some of the land is too dry, and some too hilly.'

"So I've heard," I says.

"And one of the best paying crops in the world," he goes on, his eyes sparkling at the thought. 'You get rich in no time. It isn't everybody that knows it, but it's so. All you have got to do is lay back in a hammock and boss the natives and draw dividends. The natives will work for two-bits a day, and a good man will cut a hundred bunches a day. It's a cinch. It's got stage driving skinned a thousand ways.'

"Yes," I says, 'if it's so.'

"I'm a man of my word," he says, firing up a little. 'And Barnwell is a

man of his word. He says it's so, and I say it's so. So it is so.'

"Of course," I says.

"But if our word isn't enough," he goes on. 'Here it is on paper. Read it for yourself.'

"And he digs down in his pocket and fishes up one of those real-estate folders, with a map in the middle, and a picture of blue men cutting off bunches of red bananas bigger than themselves, and carrying them on board of a green ship in a yellow sea, and figures and dollar marks all over the back of the folder, showing how many crops they bear each year, and how many thousand dollars they bring an acre.

"Looks like the old Sunday School picture of the bunch of grapes that they raised in Canaan," I says. 'Took two men and a pole to carry it. It's lovely.'

"Of course, it's lovely," he says. 'And the loveliest part of it is, that it's so. It's just like the picture. Barnwell has been there and saw it.'

"How much did you pay him?" I asks. 'I'd heard the train whistle.'

"Well," he says, 'I don't mind telling you, since it's you. Everything I had, except two hundred dollars that I've got here in my pocket.'

"And how much was everything?" I goes on.

"A sixteen horse, two-rig, forty-mile, stage line," he says. 'That and a thousand dollars. Or about five thousand in all. But I got a hundred acres of land. Barnwell wouldn't have done so well only he's made his pile, and don't need any more. "Enough is enough," he says. "Let the other fellow have a show." "Amen," I says, and we swapped.'

"Yes," I says, sort of slow, 'I see.' But I didn't tell him what it was I saw.

"By that time the branch train was beginning to puff about two miles out, and there was a restless old female who had a piece of baggage to check and was trying to poke her umbrella through the window at Ike, the operator. I got up, and held out my hand.

"Well," I says, 'I'm glad, anyhow, that I met you. I hope you have luck. And if you ever come back this way, stop off and see me.'

"'I will, sure,' he says, shaking my hand. 'I'm a man of my word.'

"'And I'm a man that likes men of their word,' I says. And I went off across the platform to do the checking.

"That was in May.

"The next time I saw him was in October. I know the nights had begun to get a snap in them, and the people from the East to drop off for deer shooting out in the Devil's River country. We had a bunch of them most every day. Most of them were business men, with heavy watch chains, and big stomachs that fitted in beneath roll-top desks, and had a raft of hired men along to carry things, and guns enough to chase all South America into the sea. But once in a while there would be a woman with the crowd. And I remember this day on account of the woman. She was one of the kind that you don't see often, and don't forget soon after you do see.

"She was short and chunky, like a quail, and wore knee skirts, and a man's hat, and had red cheeks, and moved about like she was made of India rubber stuffed with watch springs. You knew that she was here from the minute she lit. Also you could see that she was the kind that twisted people, especially men, about her finger like macaroni sticks, and that she kept the Foreign Missionary and the W. C. T. U. societies of her home town from running out of something to talk about. It wasn't because she was bad—those kind aint—but she was just crammed full of life and spirits and lived with the lid off, and didn't care.

"Before she had been here ten minutes, she had me cornered over there by the baggage room and was spitting words up into my face so fast that it made me feel like I was talking to an electric battery on a wet day.

"'Do you belong here?' she says.

"'I don't know of anybody that has got a deed to me,' I says. 'But I've been here going on ten year next July.'

"'Smart, aint you?' she says, laughing and sticking out her lips like she was mad.

"'Maybe,' I says, looking her over, and noticing how cute she was, and say-

ing to myself that if she hadn't already done it, she was going to make some man a lot of trouble some day, and a good wife.

"Then she drew her lips back, and put her hands on her hips, the way they all do when there is a man about, and cocked her head on one side like a wren carrying straws in nesting time, and began to get confidential.

"'Say,' she says, 'no fooling now; I want to know something.'

"'Say it,' I says.

"'Well, it's this way. I've read a lot of stuff about the West, and been to plays, and to moving pictures, and I want to know, honest now, cross-your-heart-and-hope-to-die: Is the West what it's cracked up to be?'

"'In what way?' I says. 'There's more ways than the one the duck went to water on the day that the fox hid behind the gooseberry bush and run a thorn in his foot. What are you looking for?'

"'I didn't say I was looking for anything,' she says. 'But since you are so out-and-out, I'll tell you. It's the men I'm interested in—the real bad ones—the kind that carry guns, and wear snake-skin hat-bands, and have goatees for beards, and are six-foot high, and always keep their word, and shoot everybody that they don't like the looks of, and talk like "Wolfville Nights." Are there any of them about?'

"'Killers?' I says. 'Is that what you mean?'

"'Yes; I guess that's it,' says she.

"'Well,' I says, 'there's a lot of killing done here. But the most of it is done over at the Irrigator, and to gentlemen that wear cork hats, and blue ribbons about their throats, and come from Milwaukee. Plenty of booze killers; but no man killers. If it's them you are looking for, you'll have to go further on. Arizona may be the place, but they say they have all died off out there for want of something to do.' I thought that would discourage her.

"'I'm sorry,' she says, and her lips lengthened out about two inches. You could see then that down underneath all the tom-boy she was a real woman, and

took things in a woman's way, and had had her heart set on a killer.

"'Why?' I asks. 'What do you want with one?'"

"'Why—why,' she says. And the light began to dance again in her eyes. 'You see, this is my trip. Tom and Harold, my brothers, are only along with me. I want to kill a deer.'

"'No law against it,' I says. 'And plenty of deer, if you go where they are.'

"'That isn't it,' she says. 'I know that. But I want one of these bad men

for a guide, one that could sit around the fire at night and tell stories, and make your blood creep. Haven't you got one about here?—A man of his word?'"

"'A man of his word?' I says. And I began to think. It seemed that I had heard something of the kind before somewhere and that if I could lay my finger on it I'd have it. But I couldn't think of it.

"'No,' I says, after I had puzzled a bit. 'I can't think of none right now. But later on I might.'

"'I think it's real nasty of the place,' she says. 'I wanted him so.' And her face got long and gloomy as a Puritan sermon. 'But if you happen to see, or hear of anybody,' she goes on, 'let me know.'



"'Bananas! Bananas,' shouts the kid.

"'Woods looks like he was dead to the world, and couldn't hear thunder'"

Miss Carter is my name.'

"I will, Miss Carter," I says. And she goes back to those two brothers of hers, who were standing in front of the depot, and chatters away to them for about two minutes, telling them what she thought of the place. Then they all went off across lots to the town.

"It was right after that that I saw Woods again. I didn't know it was him at first, on account of his having his back toward me and his head down in his hands. I didn't know it until one of those Mexican kids who has got a name like kittens a-mewing came along with a basket of bananas that he would try to sell through the car windows to the tourists.

"Bananas! Bananas! Nice ripe Mexican bananas!" he shouts. And he stops right in front of Woods and stands on one foot scratching it with the other.

"Woods looked like he was dead to the world, and couldn't hear thunder. But the way he got up, and went to waving his arms, and cussing, made you think of dynamite going off.

"B-r-r-r-h! Git! B r r h!" he hollers, or something of the kind.

"Why!" I says, going across to him, 'it's Woods, isn't it; Red-Water Woods? Welcome back to God's country.'

"You have named the other place all right," he says, still in a bad humor. 'It doesn't belong to Him.' And he jerked his thumb in a wicked way over his shoulder, and his mustache began to tremble and work up and down like a dog's nose just before he bites you.

"While he was doing it, I was sizing him up, and noticing the changes. He'd added a snake-skin band to his hat, and raised one of those little chin beards about the size of your thumb, and was browned and blackened by the sun till he looked like one of those bad men out of the fairy tales.

"What's the matter with the other place?" I asked. 'Isn't it what you thought it was?'

"Not by a jugful, nor two jugfuls," he says, 'nor a whole barrel.'

"Then he turned those blue, look-you-through-to-China eyes on me and says, all in a breath, with a blaze in them like

sulphur matches a-lighting: 'Joe,' he says, 'do I look like a man of my word?'

"You do," I says. 'I noticed it from the first.'

"Well," he goes on, sort of clicking his teeth together, 'I'm just what I look—a man of my word. And the word now is murder—bloody murder.'

"Murder!" I says.

"Yes, murder!" he says. "I'm going to kill that Barnwell! And I'm going to do it as soon as steam will take me to him." And he hitched up the side of his pants that his gun hung on, and scowled like the wild man in the side show when he's tearing up raw meat with his teeth.

"I tried to pour oil on the waters, and get him out of the notion. But he had his head set, and nitroglycerine or gun-cotton wouldn't have moved him.

"No," he says. 'He stung me—and it's my turn to play hornet.'

"Regardless of everything: law, love, and the blazing hereafter?" I asks.

"Regardless!" he says. 'I'm a man of my word.'

"And I saw by the green of his eyes that he meant it.

"But all at once, he stopped his raring and tearing, and his eyes began to bug out like a boy's does the first time he's to a show and sees the elephant picking up hay with his nose. All the blood and murder went out of him like blowing out a lamp. He began to smile, and rake his hand through his hair, and to get his breath in short gasps.

"Joe," he says, 'who's that? Tell me?'

"Who's who?" I says. And I turned around to look. There wasn't nobody in sight but those two hunters who were standing in front of the depot feeling of their watch chains.

"She's gone now," he says, 'gone into the depot.' And he went to straightening his handkerchief about his neck.

"It was a she, then?" I says.

"Yes," he says, 'if she didn't have wings.'

"A kind of apple dumpling style of a woman?" I goes on.

"Yes," he says. 'Who is she?'

"Why?" I asks. 'Do you know her?'

"No," he says. 'That's just it; I

don't. But I've got to know her.' And he went to swallowing hard, and couldn't finish. I saw then and there that the jig was up. Whenever a man loses his tongue over a woman, he's dead sure to throw his head in along with it.

"Just then the woman come out, and went to telling her brothers, in a voice like a blue-jay talking to a squirrel, what a bum place this was.

"That her?' I asks Woods.

"Yes,' he gasps.

"I'll do what I can,' I says. 'What is it that you want?'

"To get acquainted—to be near her—about her—to talk to her,' he says. 'Fix it up for me, and I'll do anything for you. I swear it, and I'm a man of my word.'

"I was getting pretty tired of that talk about his being a man of his word; but when he come over it again, I thought of something.

"All right,' I says. 'You stick about here for a few minutes and don't untie your handkerchief, nor hide your gun, nor do anything to make you look like you were human.

"And I went across to the woman.

"Beg your pardon,' I says, 'for acting the goat. But I think that I've found that killer you were looking for. He's on his way now to do a job.'

"How lovely,' she says. 'Goody! goody! gee!' And she begins to dance up and down, and clap her hands.

"Where is he? Take me to him quick!' she says.

"I pointed him out to her, and told her his name, and she kind of squeals, and runs across the platform, like a country girl chasing chickens out of the strawberries, and goes to talking to him.

"The end of it was, that in about two hours he'd got an outfit together, and the people loaded into it and was driving off across the range.

"Just before he left, however, he came over to tell me good-by, and how much I'd done for him, and to shake my hand.

"You've done me an awful good turn, Joe,' he says. 'And I wont forget it. I'll hand it back some of these days. See if I don't. I'm a man of my word.'

"Well, continue to be,' I says. 'There's few enough of them left, and we need some for seed. Luck to you.'

"Same to you,' he says.

"And he drives away.

"It was about four months before I saw him again. I'd had a couple of letters from him, though, in great big, sprawling letters, that looked like country school boys tumbling over one another, and I learned from the first one that the girl had killed her deer, and that she was the only niece of a thick-necked old bachelor who sold stocks or something of the kind and was going to die some day from eating too much beef and leave her a wagon-load of money. She was drawing five thousand a year of it ahead of time, and was going to get a fifty-thousand wad of it on the day she was married.

"The second letter, which come about six weeks after the first one, kind of scared me when it come. It was big, and square, and solemn-looking, and post-marked Los Angeles, and had the picture of a ten-story hotel up in the corner.

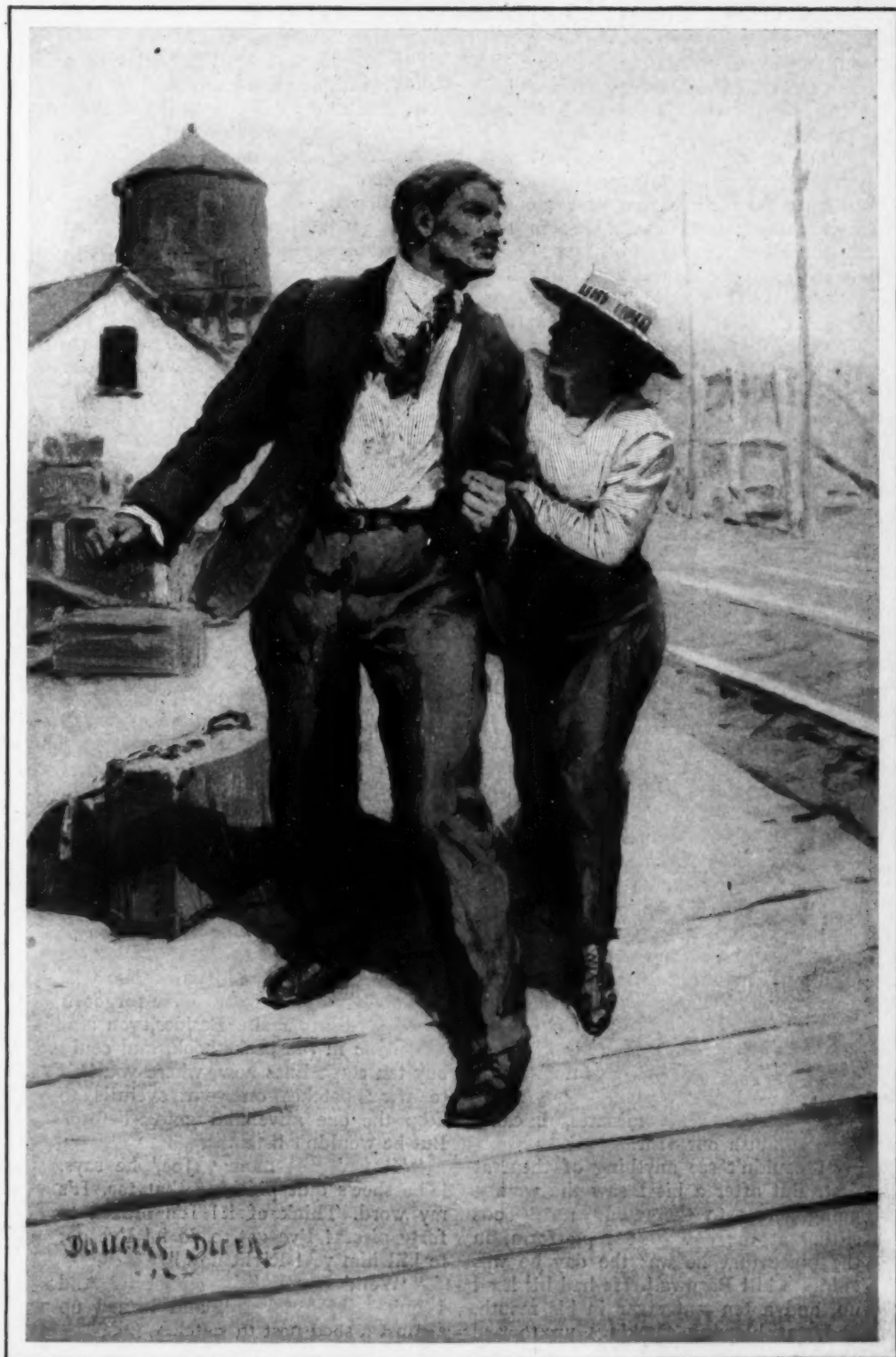
"I'd never got a big letter like that except that time I put the hardware drummer's checks on the old maid's trunk, and the fellow reported me to the company in a six-page letter. But this one was from Woods, all right, and it said that Miss Carter was Mrs. Woods now, and that they were honeymooning in Los Angeles, but would be going east soon and would stop off to see me.

"And in about six days they kept their word.

"I was on top of my truck, I remember, taking stuff from the train, and busy as a bee in alfalfa time. The first I knew they were here was when the woman began to giggle and shout.

"Oh, Mr. Ware!' she hollers. 'Jump down here, quick! I want to kiss you!'

"In a minute,' I says, looking down to see who it was. 'I am busy just now.' And I slung the last piece of baggage up, and the trainman slammed his door. I didn't get down right away, though. I saw that she was excited, and might keep her word. Besides, Woods was standing about four feet behind her,



"Matter?" he says, "I'm going to kill a man; that's all"

pulling his mustache in a thoughtful way, and looking uneasy. So I stayed on top of my truck until the heat kind of passed over, when I got down.

"We're so glad to see you!" she says. And she grabbed one of my big number-ten paws between her two little ones and worked it up and down like a man in his sock feet pumping a bucket of water on the back porch on a frosty morning. 'You've no idea how much you have done for us!' she says. 'And we want to do something for you. Just name it, and Hi' will do it. He's a man of his word.'

"Yes, I'm that kind—a man of my word," Wood comes in.

"Forget it," I says. 'It's all over and done now, and I'm ready to do it again.'

"And in that way I kind of got them choked off on the reward racket, and to talking about their trip to the sea, and how far you had to ride in a boat before the fish sat at the table, and what became of the pieces of the waves that broke on the shore, and all that. But all the while I was talking, I was noticing how she had got Woods rigged out in a tailor-made coat, and pearl derby, and how his face had changed until it looked as soft and innocent as a plate of mush. He looked more like one of those soft-handed city preachers, who don't do nothing but pass the plate for the widows and washerwomen to put their nickels on, than the Red-Water Woods who was going to kill a man four months back.

"Well," I says, after we'd shook hands all around again, 'the branch train is due in ten minutes, and I'll have to mosey along. Going to lay over, aint you?'

"Till next train," Woods says.

"Then I'll see you again." And I went on with my truck.

"In about twenty minutes, I came back to finish our visit.

"I couldn't see anything of them at first. But after a bit I saw the woman going across to the town, and Woods sitting at the end of the platform, in the place that he was the day he was going to kill Barnwell. He had his head up, and a ten-cent cigar in his mouth, and was blowing smokings up toward

the ceiling, and looking as happy as a Chink in a joss house. I couldn't help but think how he'd changed, and how much better it was to be that way than to be raring and tearing around, with his mouth open like a calf, bellowing for blood.

"But just as I was thinking this, and walking over toward him, along comes that Mexican kid with his basket of bananas. He'd picked Woods for a mark.

"Bananas! Nice ripe Mexican bananas!" he shouts, and stops before Woods with his basket held out, and one foot scratching the other, same as before.

"Woods looks at him a minute, lazy and good-natured. Then he jumps to his feet with a yell that would have shook green plums off a tree.

"B-r-r-r-r-h! B-r-r-r-h! Git!" he shouts. And his hand slipped over toward the side of his clothes where his gun used to be.

"What's the row?" I says.

"B-r-r-r-r-h! B-r! B-r-r-h!" He stutters some more, like a heavy engine stuck on a wet rail.

"Then he kind of gets a grip on his tongue, and explains.

"It's Barnwell!" he says. 'I forgot to kill him! I clean forgot it! And I'm a man of my word!' And he stood there with his fists clinched, not knowing whether to cry or swear. You could see that it cut him down to his marrow-bone to think that he had forgotten it.

"Well," I says, trying to cool him off a little, 'the milk is spilt now, and the cat under the kitchen licking her paws, so what's the difference. You forgot it once; forget it again. Besides, you aint hurt none in the pocketbook, and could buy ten stage lines now, where you had to wear patches on your overalls to keep the one alive and going before.' But he wouldn't listen.

"It isn't the money, Joe," he says. 'The shoe's quit pinching that toe. It's my word. Think of it! It's broken to forty pieces! I've got to do it! I've got to kill him yet! Right now!'

"Well," I says, 'it's you for it.' And I quit talking to him, and leaned up against a shed post to watch.

"While I was standing there, a great, big, bay-windowed fellow, who had been stopping over at the Lone Star for a couple of days, trying to buy the XC ranch down on the border, came around the depot with his hands behind his back, and a big cigar in his mouth, and goes to walking up and down by the baggage room. I didn't pay much attention to him, for I knew who he was, and that he was likely making up one of those night messages that he'd been sending off every day to his office in Chicago, telling the clerks and hired hands to sell this, and bull that, and maybe not to forget to feed the calves, or water the rest of the stock, and stuff like that, like a man who is interested in cattle will say. So, knowing what he was, I didn't pay much attention.

"But the minute Woods saw him, his breath began to come in short, quick pants, and his eyes to get a shining pea-green.

"Look!" he says. "Look! It's him!"

"Who?" I says.

"Barnwell!" he says. "The banana man! And I haven't no gun! But I'll get one!" he goes on, and started with long, heavy steps toward the town.

"He's a man of his word," I says to myself, "and he will do it." And I looked to be wading about in blood knee deep in about twenty minutes.

"But just as he got to the edge of the platform, he met his wife. She'd got through her business over town, whatever it was, and was hurrying back with a look on her face like a first love letter.

"But when she saw Woods, and all the brimstone and blazes that was in him, the gladness all went out of her face; and she stopped and threw her hands up like she'd seen a mouse or a green worm was about to drop on her. She'd likely never seen a man before with the killing rage in his face.

"Why, Hi!" she says. "What's the matter?"

"Matter?" he says, stopping to answer her. "I'm going to kill a man. That's all!" And he started to go by.

"What for?" she asks. And she came up to him. "Who is he, and what's he done? I want to know."

"Haven't got time to tell you now," he says. And he started on again.

"But she wouldn't let him go.

"You've got to tell me, Hi," she says. And she grabbed him by the sleeve, and kind of rubbed herself up against him like a cat under the table at dinner time, and looked up into his eyes the way a woman can, and does, when she's after something, and the man means to say no.

"Well, if I must, I must," he says. And he tells her the whole story from A to Izzard.

"When he was through, the woman reached up her arms as high as she could, and gave him a little hug, and began to laugh—one of these soft little laughs that make you think of a bird with a waterfall in its mouth.

"You poor, dear, big, old goose," she says.

"Goose!" Woods says. "Why? I don't understand."

"Because," she says. And her eyes were looking up into his and dancing. "Because he's our uncle—Uncle Will. That's why. You wont do it now, will you, Hi?" And she stood there with her arms about him, and her face turned up studying him.

"Woods is still a little stormy about the face, and don't answer her for a minute. You could see he was figuring it. The woman saw it, too. And she was doing some figuring, too.

"Hi," she says, after a minute, "do you love me?"

"Of course," he says.

"Then kiss me," she says.

"I turned my head, but I heard something pop and fizzle like a whole bunch of firecrackers going off at once. It stopped, and I looked back. Hi, as she called him, didn't look near so dangerous. She had her arms still around him, and was leaning kind of heavy against him, and smiling up into his face.

"Now," she says, "promise me one thing, Hi."

"What's that?" he asks.

"That you wont do it."

"I wont," he says, "and I'm a man of my word."

The HOUSE of *the* THREE ROADS



Bonehead Tierney, Inc., Employs
a Swell Guy to catch a Swell Guy

By JOHN A. MOROSO

Author of "Solid Ivory," "Bonehead Tierney, Inc.," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY W. J. SCOTT

WHEN James Tierney, Incorporated, sometimes referred to by the New York police as "Bonehed Tiearney, Incorporated," got his private detective agency going to the satisfaction of the group of bankers that had capitalized him, he looked about for what he called a "swell guy."

About him he had a staff of honest, capable plain-clothes men, many of whom had served with him at the Central office under Jim McCafferty. They were efficient and true as steel, but not a one of them was fitted for the gentleman detective rôle. For instance, Reilley threw up his hands in protest when Tierney asked him about doing a dress-suit job. Reilley swore that he could not get away with the "lar-de-dar" business and that he would resign before he would pack his heels into patent leathers.

So Tierney went forth and sought one who could "throw side," and his friend Flynn of the Secret Service turned over to him Grantham Waldron.

Waldron lived on adventure. His people were wealthy, and Grant, as his friends called him, had no need to worry

about a profession, other than the difficult one of being amused. Whenever anyone of his friends at the Harvard Club would suggest that the treasure of Lafitte or of Captain Kidd could be located, Grant always hustled about preparing for the trip. He got the yacht and provisioned it, put in the crew and started off with the crowd in high spirits and as happy as a lord.

He had been shot twice during the Boer war, while fighting for the sturdy Dutch colonists in South Africa; his neck had been saved from the gallows by his government when he was arrested for trying to heave over the Honduran government, and he had served the Secret Service of the United States in Mexico.

He still carried the little gold badge of the department hidden safely under his waistcoat, although he was only nominally on the pay-roll.

This little badge gave him access to the wireless office of the service in New York, a secret establishment, where, nightly, one operator with a finding instrument carefully picks up the messages that shoot silently through the air.



"Speak man, or give me the message!" "The Chevalier Le Roque sent me He says for you to leave immediately"

Mr. Waldron presented himself at the office of James Tierney, Incorporated, in the Triple Syndicate Building. His nobby clothes and the unmistakable air of the gentleman in his carriage convinced Tierney that he was the "swell guy" he needed.

"D'you read about the escape of Sir Dick from Sing Sing?" asked Tierney during their chat.

"The fellow who got out in a box supposed to be filled with books?" asked Waldron.

"Right," said Tierney. "That guy, Mister Waldron, is a swell, a regular swell. None of us ordinary bulls can break open a lead to his trail. He works in with the rich society people. Right now he may be parading around New York disguised as some nobleman or count fellow, spending money by the thousands and getting ready to trim somebody for a hundred times more than he spends."

"Could I recognize him after a look at his picture?" asked Waldron.

"Not on your life, Mister Waldron. Sir Dick has got the world beat for disguises. He can walk in one door of a hotel looking like a fat old man, and come out another door as pretty and as slim a dandy as you ever see. He is the most dangerous criminal in the world. He goes only after big game and is considered the master yeggman of the century."

Waldron became interested.

"What do you expect me to do?" he asked.

"I'll tell you," explained Tierney. "In high society there's lots of phony counts and baronesses and such floating around. They have a sort of circle of their own, so as to keep from being uncovered by the real count guys. I was thinking it would be a good scheme for you to get hep to that crowd and sound around for a tip that would lead to Sir Dick. He likes to play the nobleman and he used to be known as Sir Richard Calverly. Could you do it for me?"

"Doesn't sound bad," mused Waldron aloud. Then to Tierney: "This man is a gun man, of course?"

"Yes, and a bad one."

"If I get to him I might need some aid; will you give me what men I need?"

"Soitnly, Mister Waldron," exclaimed Tierney. "I'll be there meself, believe me. There's a reason."

"What did he do to you?" Waldron asked.

"Oh, he didn't do anything to me," Tierney replied. "Oh, nothing at all, Mister Waldron. He only sent a bunch of his yeggs to this office as soon as I got it all fixed up, and they took everything I had but me name on the door. Then he leaves me a note with his compliments."

Waldron roared.

He was already running over in his mind the list of questionable titles then operating in New York and was deciding on his first move in the chase of William Blythe, alias Sir Richard Calverly, alias Anthony Marcus, escaped convict No. 4837.

"I'll go after him," Waldron finally told Tierney. "Good-by."

II

Not far from the old Jumel mansion, and like it in many respects, was the Westchester home of *Madame la Comtesse Vivien de Perchauteaux*.

Madame la Comtesse had no town house, although her wealth appeared to be inordinate. During the bitter months of January, February and March she took a suite at the Plaza. All of the other months of the year her mansion was open. Her motors were the fastest made and her guests were of that class so blessed as to be beyond worry over the small matter of distance. They, too, had motors, and fast ones.

An interesting feature of the Westchester estate of the Countess Vivien was that the landscape gardening seemed awry. To the trained eye it was apparent that many possible beautiful effects in clumping shrubbery and in placing trees and vines had been sacrificed in order that three straight roads might run from the mansion, like three spokes of a wheel.

One of these went, arrowlike, to the Hudson and a privately owned landing

place beyond which there swung at anchor one of the oddest pleasure crafts ever seen in the waters about New York. It was a power yacht, low-lined and sheer, like a torpedo-boat destroyer. It had two short, stout stacks, through which thin veils of smoke always trailed, and which meant that, though gasoline engines might fail aboard her, steam would take up and keep the speed.

From either gasoline or steam this craft could get forty knots the hour. She was always manned.

Another of the straight, spoke-like highways led to the Boston Post-road, giving a fast course to the north.

The third road was short. It connected the house of *Madame la Comtesse* with the old Morris Park race track, where were sheds built for housing *aéroplanes*.

Madame la Comtesse had three fads—automobiles, yachts and *aéroplanes*. They might have been classified under one head—speed. Still better, when the three avenues through her estate were taken into consideration, a more expressive word might have been chosen—flight.

William Howard Payson, who was one of her frequent guests at week-end parties, and who was of observant nature, gave *Madame la Comtesse* a nickname. His chosen sobriquet was an abbreviation of her rather Portuguese patronimic—"La Perch."

"Why not?" asked William Howard of his club cronies. "Look at those demmed straight roads, the fast boat, the fast automobiles and the biplane with sixty horsepower engine. She seems always just about to fly."

"Who the devil is she anyhow?" asked Waldron.

"She is—er—the—er—Countess Perchauteaux," Payson replied.

"But where is her mamma and her papa and her uncles and aunts and all that?" demanded Waldron.

"In a castle somewhere, I suppose," replied Payson, annoyed. "What have you got against her anyhow?"

"Nothing."

Payson and Waldron sipped at their tall tumblers.

"She's a friend of the Chevalier Le Roque," piped in Jimmie Mallery from above a tremendously high collar and through a cloud of cigarette smoke. "Fine boy, the chevalier. Tipped me off on the rise in Steel Preferred. Made twenty double sawbucks."

"What's that slang for?" asked Waldron.

"Double sawbucks are twenty dollar certificates," explained Mallery. "Pretty neat that. What?"

"Le Roque is a good chap, I say," Payson offered. "He's always decent that way, especially when a chap is in a tight place. There isn't a man in the Street knows the game better than he does, and he never makes any-shout about it either. Why, the other day, when that big bond forgery was pulled off, trimming some of those old sharks for nearly a million dollars, and he got stuck with fifty thousand dollars worth of them, he was the only victim who didn't let out a cry."

"I didn't know that he was one of the victims," said Waldron slowly.

"Yes, siree; he told me so," emphasized Payson.

"Did he tell the police?"

Waldron's little gray eyes narrowed as he watched the face of Payson.

"He did, I believe," Payson replied.

"Did he tell you to that effect?"

"Hell!" exclaimed Payson, showing his petulance. "You're always asking questions, Waldron. One would think you worked on a yellow paper."

"Why get peevish, Willie?" asked Waldron, pulling himself from his chair and stretching his good six feet of bone and muscle. "I ask questions simply to make conversation."

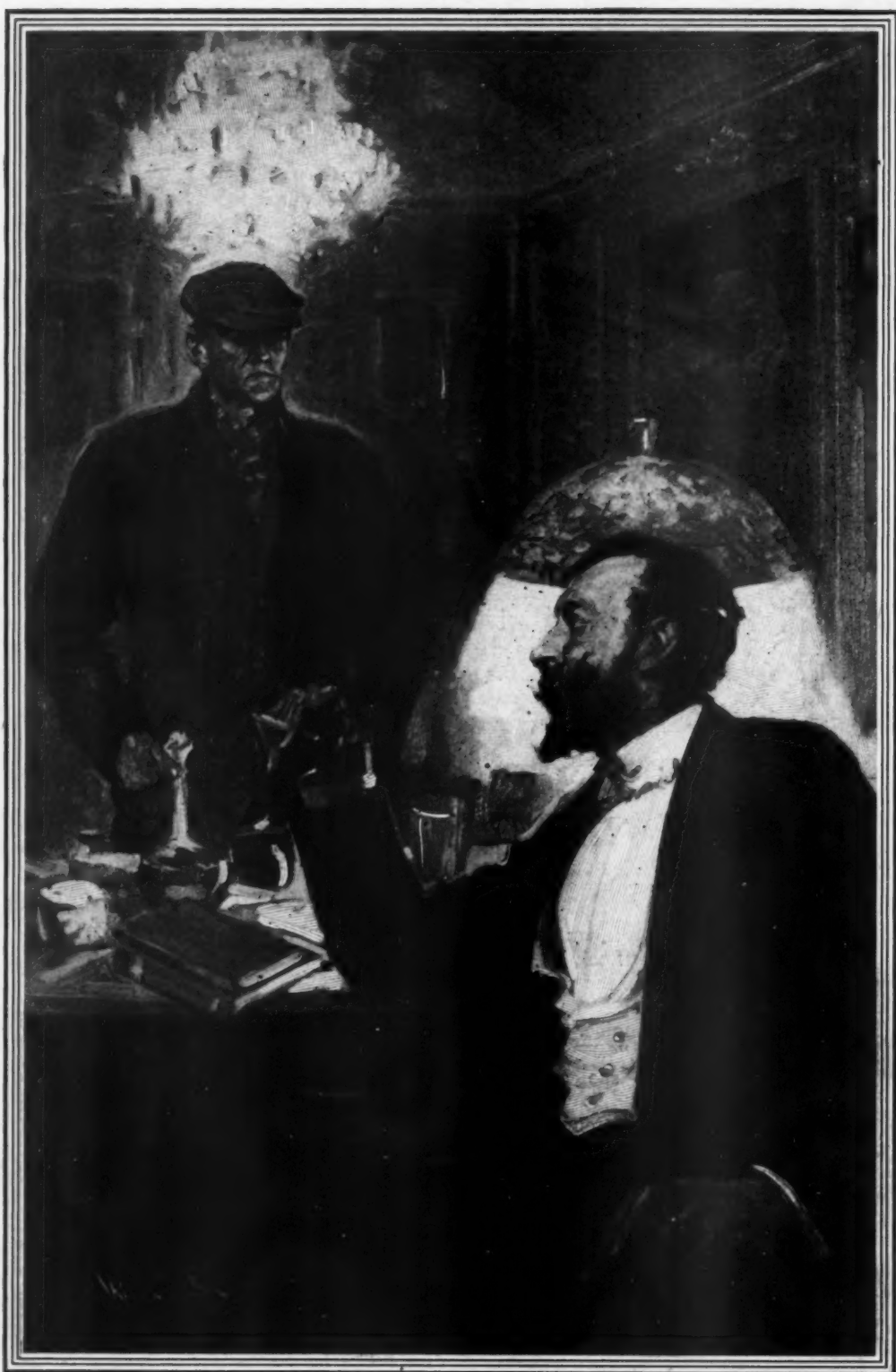
Then he straightened out the creases in his trousers, flicked imaginary cigarette ashes from his sleeves, and asked if anybody in the group wanted to go for a spin with him in his new machine.

Nobody wanted to budge and nobody budged.

"Do you mind another question, Willie?" Waldron asked Payson.

"Go ahead."

Waldron's lean, clean-shaven, dark face broke into a smile that seemed to



"Put a ladder under his window," Le Roque ordered. "Use a jimmy. Force a window. Beat his brains out. Get away quickly. One of the cars will be ready for you"

start at the corners of his lips and then suddenly to wipe out the deep lines that ran downward from the curves of his nostrils.

"I understand she will be at the club on ladies' day; will you introduce me?"

Payson, mollified by the request, looked up and laughed.

"Why, of course, Old Top," he said. "I shall be delighted. I am always glad to introduce you to any of the women I know."

Waldron, with a wave of the hand as a token of his appreciation, and in farewell to the group in the lounging room, took his leave.

His new runabout was at the door. He sent the chauffeur back to the garage and took the wheel.

High-gear and high-powered, the machine sent up a series of deafening reports from the exhaust as he got it under way. He turned out of his club street into Times Square like a burst of thunder and shot north on Seventh Avenue to the Park. Keeping just inside of the speed limit he jockeyed with such skill that he passed scores of other machines and reached Fifty-ninth Street in record time for urban travel by gasoline. In the Park, he let out a notch and, once through it and into Harlem, he let out another. In the Bronx he distanced a motor cycle policeman and, just as the sun was setting, he swung into the grounds about the mansion of *Madame la Comtesse Vivien de Perchauteaux*.

III

A limousine had just left the steps of the mansion when Waldron brought his car to a sudden stop. His face was two-thirds covered with his goggles and the high collar of his duster buttoned tight at the throat. His visor was down low over his forehead.

He writhed free from the seat and wheel and bounded up the steps of the Westchester home of the Countess Perchauteaux, his long legs working like springs.

He did not need to ring the bell. The door was open. The roar of his oncom-

ing machine had been heard by the occupant of the car ahead.

A woman of splendid presence stood before him. She had returned home from an afternoon performance of the Boston Symphony Orchestra in Carnegie Hall, and she was exquisitely gowned. Her eyes were penetrating black eyes. Her cheek bones were high and her face oval, suggesting the patrician. But there was something about her carmined lips that suggested cruelty and cunning.

Waldron, specterlike in his goggles and dust-covered coat, faced her.

"Are you *Madame la Comtesse Perchauteaux*?" he demanded.

"Yes; what is it? A message?"

"Yes."

"Speak, man, or give me the message."

"The Chevalier Le Roque sent me. He says for you to leave immediately."

In two bounds Waldron was down the steps, in his machine, and off like a noisy rocket.

He took the straight path to the Boston Post-road, sped along it for two miles and then found a good highway that would take him back to New York.

As he reached West Farms and the traffic became thick, the motor cycle cop he had passed on the way up overtook him and swung on his running board.

"Pull up, or there will be trouble," came the sharp demand. "You've smashed my machine. I had to jump it to get you."

"It's all right; never mind your machine," shouted Waldron over his shoulder. "Just hold on tight and don't get hurt."

"None of that; pull up or I'll baste you."

The cop had drawn his billy.

Waldron knew when to obey orders. He slowed down.

"I'll make you suffer for this," said the traffic man, mad as a hornet.

"Just a moment; don't lose your temper; it won't do any good," advised the man at the wheel.

Waldron still kept his eyes and face covered, but with quick, lean and nervous fingers he unbuttoned his duster and the coat beneath.

Then he tore open his waistcoat and showed a tiny gold badge attached to a silk suspender strap.

The traffic man looked at it closely in the glare of an arc light.

"That's different," he said.

"Just take care of this machine for me and hold it for good faith, old man," said Waldron. "I must take the subway. I can make better time getting down town. It is a case of hustle. *You* understand. Ask your captain not to let the number of the car get out. Send it to some near-by garage and telephone my headquarters to send for the machine of No. 237. That's my number."

"I got you," said the cop.

"The department will take care of the damages to you."

"That's all right."

They were within a hundred paces of the West Farms station of the subway.

Waldron whisked out of his duster, slapped his cap and goggles into the machine, pulled a soft hat from under a seat and was off without the policeman getting a glimpse of his features. The only description his whilom captor could give of him was that he was a good six foot in height and looked hard as nails and wiry.

Waldron, with impassive face, but within as nervous as a race horse at the gate, sat in a corner of a subway express and pretended to read a paper he had grabbed up at the station entrance. It seemed hours, although it was but minutes, before he reached the Bowling Green station and was again out in the air.

A stiff breeze was blowing from the Battery and through the old Whitehall section. He was on the outer line of New York's great wall of skyscrapers.

Into one of the tallest of the buildings he strode, making a run through the corridor to catch an elevator that was just about to start. The elevator man smiled as if he knew him and was used to seeing him rush into his car.

There was no need to give the number of the floor. When the car could go no further upward, the tall, dark visaged passenger would leave it.

The thirtieth floor was reached in time

—an æon to Waldron. He left the car and slipped into a small door at the end of the corridor. The room he entered was netted with wires and dotted with instruments that gave forth long, buzzing, crackling sounds.

One of the operators of these instruments saluted him pleasantly. Another said a cheery "Good-evening." Waldron passed them with a smile in response to their greetings, and entered an inner room.

"How is the finder working?" he asked abruptly as he entered and as a young man looked up from a wireless receiver.

"Fine," was the reply.

"I want to pick up the 'Jx' call if we can," Waldron told him. "It is an important matter."

"I've been feeling all around for the non-listed calls," replied the operator, "but not a one yet."

He moved a little lever over a disk which contained a series of metal rises, each of which would admit his receiver to a different etherial key.

"Keep at it," ordered Waldron. "I'll sit here and smoke."

He pulled out a cigarette case and took a chair.

The operator kept moving his lever slowly, slowly. Suddenly there came a faint buzzing sound. He clamped the ear cups closer to his skull, lifting a hand to demand silence. Waldron leaned back and turned the key in the door of the inner office. In the Morse code came the call: "Jx-Jx-Jx-Jx."

"Got it?" asked Waldron.

"Yes."

Some ship at sea was calling for "Jx." There was a wait and then came a reply, picked up on top of this skyscraper in Whitehall:

"Jx—Go ahead with the message."

The receiving instrument buzzed away now, robbing the air of its secrets.

"Jx," came the message. "Passing Sandy Hook. What's the matter?"

"Nothing here. Join you at Atlantic City," was the reply.

The operator and Waldron waited for an hour, holding the "Jx" key, but there was nothing further.

"Anything else?" asked the operator.

"Just keep tab and telephone me if anything comes along," was Waldron's order as he departed.

He took a subway train uptown and went to his apartment. His valet reported the list of telephone calls for the night and presented him with his mail.

"Bring me a Scotch and soda, please," he instructed the man. "Then you may retire."

Waldron threw open a window, pulled up a comfortable chair and sipped as he reflected.

"They're guilty, all right," he mused. "But of what? I shall try to find out."

IV

The Chevalier Le Roque felt his way cautiously for six weeks after the Countess, his most intimate friend, had informed him of the message delivered to her. What did it mean? He tried every means available to a man of money

and splendid mental resources to solve this mystery, but he failed to fathom it.

The Chevalier was the silent partner in a firm of brokers which had bought out a good name on the Street. The good name was kept and the foreigner and his associates worked under its protection. No hint of their being under surveillance had come to them in any shape. Men who obeyed the Chevalier at the raising of his hand or the nod of his head had even "nosed" the police, but they found that the police were not interested.

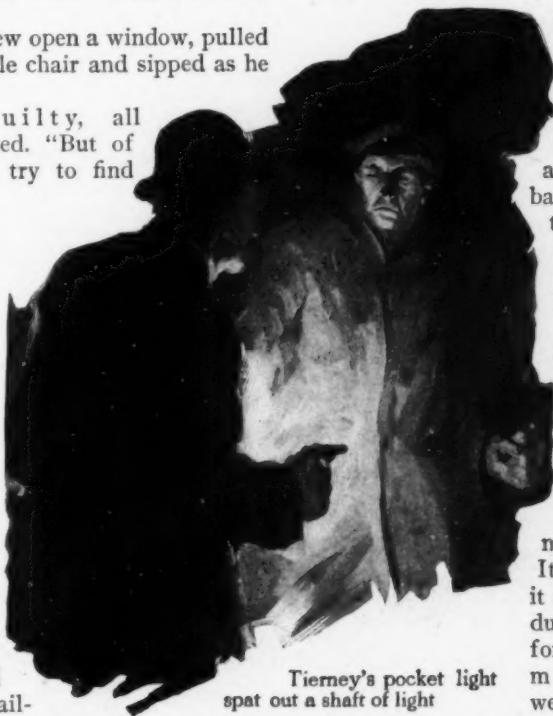
"Nerves, dammit; nerves," was the decision of the Chevalier. "She was

either mistaken in the words the man spoke or the whole thing was phantasmagoria. I could wring her neck for worrying me so."

By his orders, the countess came back to town. The season was well under way now, with the opera on, the cotillions starting and the gaiety of late fall and winter calling from abroad New York's richest idlers.

It was to be the big season of pluck-

ing for the Chevalier, and without Vivien Perchauteaux he would be minus a choice bit of bait for his victims. Through her aid he had managed to get knowledge of just what bonds of the highest class were hypothecated for long terms, securities that would be out of the market for years. It would be and it did prove safe to duplicate these by forgery. A half million dollars went into "Street" transactions and



Tierney's pocket light
spat out a shaft of light

drifted all over the country to safe deposit vaults of various banks.

The Chevalier Le Roque, in the sanctity of his private office, dropped his slight French accent, stroked his yellow Van Dyke beard, and swore at woman in hearty British fashion and with the same intonation that Sir Richard Calverly had sworn on a prior occasion of crime when he was annoyed at his work.

By his command, therefore, the Countess Perchauteaux planned her social activities for the season. They promised well, for her coterie had stretched through the fringe of society and into it, acquiring a gay set of young college



"A fine catch! Spanish Lizzie and my old friend Idaho Michael O'Brien!"

men, who gloried in any excitement she might devise for their pleasure, from a wild joy ride to Westchester and the payment of police fines, to a night with sensuous Russian and Greek dancers.

Before the holiday time, Grantham Waldron had joined the gay set that used the money and the home of the ambitious titled woman in return for their company and their non-inquisitiveness as to where she got both.

Waldron, by diligent listening and by cautious questioning, had learned that Le Roque had told his acquaintances that he had been stuck for fifty thousand dollars of the bogus bonds. He reported to Tierney. Tierney told him with a smile that that was an old ruse and also told him that the most successful pick-pockets were those who could raise the cry of thief loudest and start up the chase of a dummy.

One week-end with the Countess and her friends had convinced Waldron that the woman was not only of questionable character but that she was also sinister. Beautiful and fine as a hostess she was, but he sensed the wrong in her, and a study of the old mansion made him certain that it was a place for strange and secret happenings.

The butler of the house was a man of massive strength, heavy boned and with the neck that professional wrestlers have. There was another servant showing the same tremendous physical power. Both were well trained, but neither looked born to his profession.

The Chevalier, who professed to have known the Countess on the other side, and who was so frequently her guest, proved a delightful man. Waldron was always pleased with his conversation. The Chevalier had had adventures in his youth—so he said—but now that he was close to fifty he preferred adventures in story form.

"I used to love danger, *Monsieur Waldron*," he said. "When I was your age I was ready for anything and could hold my own with any man with foil or pistol. I could run like a deer and I always kept my muscles hard. I keep them in good shape now, indeed."

The Chevalier lifted his eyebrows as

if a challenge was implied. Waldron laughed.

"I had an idea that only Americans were supposed to boast," he said.

Monsieur Le Chevalier gave the younger man a sharp glance. Waldron felt that the look asked: "Who are you, anyhow?"

But the first week-end visit was a success for every guest. The women were of the class who were either divorced or preparing for the spring Reno hegira. Still their names gave newspaper tone in the Sunday society pages to the functions they attended.

Before the visit ended for the guests in the Westchester mansion, so much real jolly sport had been had that all accepted the invitation of the Countess to have it all over again the Saturday and Sunday following. Waldron swore to his hostess that nothing could keep him away.

Again in town, Waldron hunted up the office of "Bonehead Tierney, Incorporated."

"Le Roque may not be the man you want—that—er—Sir Dick, or What-d'ye-call-'em," he told Tierney without delay, "but he is the man who did the \$500,000 bond forgery, and the woman helped. I've studied the house as best I could from top to bottom, and there is a counterfeiter's plant in it—in the basement."

"What kind of a nose has the Chevalier geezer?" asked Tierney.

"Long and thin."

"Little pockmarked on the left side?"

"Didn't notice it."

"Well, he could putty up the holes."

"He has a sharp pointed beard and upturned mustache."

"It's false."

Waldron looked at Tierney and wondered if he meant an insult.

"The whiskers," explained Tierney. "If he is Sir Dick he carries plenty of them in his pockets."

"I am going back this week for a week-end party," said Waldron, "and I am going to ransack that house from garret to cellar some time during that night or the next morning."

"Take a gun—here's a peach."

Tierney reached into his drawer and pulled out an automatic pistol. "All y'gotter do is squeeze it. It keeps shootin'," he explained.

"Suppose I get the goods on them?" asked Waldron, pocketing the gun.

"Blow this," replied Tierney, handing him a silver whistle. "I'll be there and Horgan will be there. Reilley will be there and Duffy, the Man-eater, will be there."

"All right; good-by," said Waldron, swinging from the room.

V

Motors burned up the roads in the direction of the Perchauteaux house in Westchester. It was too fine a day to linger in town, with the country so near for a breezing ride and a hospitable roof waiting at the end of the spin.

Madame la Comtesse Vivien de Perchauteaux welcomed her guests on the threshold of her wide door beneath an ancient fanlight. They came up the broad steps leading to the piazza, all gay and ebullient, enjoying the weather and the anticipation of the fun waiting for them within.

A noise as of thunder rose above the chugging of the last machine to reach the foot of the piazza steps and up the straight road leading from the main highway north came a gray streak, a goggled and visored man leaning over the wheel.

The machine stopped at the house and the man at the wheel left his seat and ran with big leaps up the steps, taking them three at a time. He did not stop to remove his cap and goggles. His duster, still buttoned tightly at the throat, concealed the lower part of his chin.

The Countess Vivien uttered one shriek and fainted.

Waldron pulled cap and goggles from his head and face with a cry of astonishment, and picked up the lady. He took her into the hall.

The Chevalier Le Roque had been standing near her, but with the cry from the hostess had stepped back into the shadows of the entry.

The butler with the terrible neck

muscles and giant frame picked up his mistress as soon as Waldron had placed her on a lounge, and carried her up the winding stairs to her bedroom.

Le Roque disappeared in the excitement.

He reached the bedroom of the Countess by the servants' way and waited patiently for her to regain consciousness as a maid chafed her wrists and held a bottle of salts to her nostrils. When the eyes opened the Chevalier dismissed the maid.

"What was it?" he asked calmly.

"It was the man who brought the message," she gasped.

Le Roque slipped his hand to his right hip pocket. The gun was there.

"The man is Waldron," he said. "I suspected him, although I looked him up and he seemed to be all right."

"Let's get away, Will, while there is time," she said, sitting up and arranging her fallen hair. "We can slope out of the back way and get to a machine. It is always ready."

Le Roque hesitated a moment.

"No," he said, "we shall stay to-night. A burglar may enter the house and a guest may be killed."

She slipped from the bed and straightened her smart gown with her jeweled fingers.

"Stick it out," he told her. "I'll attend to the gentleman."

Le Roque slipped back to the hall by the servants' way and in a few minutes the Countess joined her guests, apologizing for her illness.

A dinner gloriously cooked; wine of the oldest vintages; a wild dance done by Maurice and a slender and slenderly garbed woman partner; superb coffee and superb brandy, with which to light the cigarettes as the sugar burned; chatter and repartee and gossip with an edge—these made the hours fly. The hostess was as gay as any woman at the table or in the salon. Midnight, and the women were abed, for the wine had flowed constantly. The majority of the men quit their gambling at billiards or bridge by two o'clock.

A great clock in the hall chimed the four quarters of Dick Whittington and

then boomed solemnly and sonorously three strokes. The Chevalier Le Roque was alone in the library. The giant butler entered. His livery had been replaced by an old suit of clothes. The collar of the coat was turned up under his red ears. A cap was pulled over his eyes.

"Put a ladder under his window," Le Roque ordered. "Use a jimmy. Force the window. Beat his brains out. Get away quickly. One of the cars will be ready for you at a safe distance from the house. You will catch a westbound express at Poughkeepsie in the morning. Here is some money."

The thug took a roll of bills and nodded.

"Leave two gunny sacks on the floor of his room, along with the jimmy and the billy you smash him with," ordered his chief.

"Yes, sir."

"Go."

The man, although walking on the polished hardwood floor, made no sound as he moved. The heels and soles of his shoes were of rubber.

Le Roque waited, smoking a cigarette. In a few moments the Countess joined him in a boudoir wrapper. Her cries would awaken the guests and tell the story of attempted burglary—and the story of murder.

VI

The thug forced the window of Waldron's bedroom and leaped within.

He felt his way to the couch of the man he was to kill and extended his left hand, holding his billy in his right. The bed was empty.

He smothered a curse and crossed the room to the door, opening it. He peered out into the corridor and listened with keen ears. At first he could see nothing, but his ears told him that some one was tiptoeing toward the hall stairs. His man had begun his exploration of the house. The thug stepped into the hall and began to follow, with silent, quick and long strides, the man he was to kill.

Waldron, further down the hall, felt a chill from behind. It was the outside air that had rushed into his room with

the forcing of the window and the opening of the door. He knew that he was followed. He drew the automatic revolver Tierney had given him and slipped the whistle to his lips.

As he approached the landing of the stairs he pulled aside into a mass of dark shadows and waited. The man behind him turned the corner of the corridor, peered down the stairs and then ran down them. Instead of being pursued, Waldron was now the pursuer. He followed and stepped into the library almost at the shoulder of Le Roque's assassin.

"Here's a burglar I caught for you," he said, pleasantly to the Chevalier and the Countess. "I guess I had better call for the police." He sounded a shrill summons to Tierney and his men.

One of the library windows gave in with a crash and Tierney sprawled on the floor. Before he could pick himself to his feet, Le Roque, one time known as Sir Richard Calverly, escaped convict No. 4837, had leaped to the wall and had turned off the electric lights.

Tierney's pocket light spat out a shaft of white. It struck full in the face of the butler.

"Move, and you're deader than hell," said Tierney.

Reilley had followed his chief and his light showed in a second.

"Grab the dame," Waldron heard Tierney say. He grabbed her.

"Git on the lights, Reilley," was the next command.

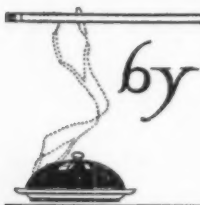
It took time to find that precious ebony button on the wall. The lights flooded the room. "Sir Dick" was gone. Tierney looked at the Countess and then at the butler, who stood with upraised hands.

"A fine catch," he said. "Spanish Lizzie and my old friend Idaho Michael O'Brien."

As the other men tumbled into the room the sound of an automobile horn was heard in the distance.

It was the farewell salute of William Blythe, alias Sir Richard Calverly, alias the Chevalier Le Roque, escaped convict No. 4837, to "Bonehead Tierney, Incorporated."

Blue Points and Baked Beans



GERTRUDE BROOKE HAMILTON

Author of "The One Who Ran," etc.

ANTHONY, despite a respectful smile, benignant eyes, romantically repressed mouth and elegantly sloping shoulders, had gone down in the world. From Waiter No. 3 in a softly shaded Chop House he had, in the space of two months, descended to a lonely and desolate position in an Eating Place whose street car advertisements read: "*If your mother can beat our cooking, we will give your mother a job.*"

An excess of temperament had been the cause of Anthony's downfall; he had been prone to dream, to stand on one foot and then on the other, with mild eyes fastened upon the ceiling—while well-garbed and testy patrons had rapped their knuckles on their tables or clinked spoons against their glasses to induce Anthony's descent from the clouds. The high places in this world were never intended for dreamers.

Anthony had received his dismissal from the manager of the Chop House, and had, after falling victim to the allurements of selling doormats on commission, found doubtful harbor in the long, low Eating Place, whose walls were studded with unshaded electric bulbs and adorned by signs warning patrons to be responsible for their own coats, hats and umbrellas, and whose little tables were set out with thick sugar bowls, flat bottles of oil and vinegar, and a nondescript collection of sauces, catsups and salad dressings.

At first, Anthony had played the rôle of a king, who, for the welfare of humanity, consents to put away his crown and descend to the hungry rabble. Keeping in step with the other members of the "just so, sir," profession, Anthony had nursed a huge idea of his own importance in the scheme of life; and amid the roses and glamour of the Chop House, his bows, expressing reverent admiration for whatever tricks a freakish humanity might preform, had claimed attention. In the Eating Place, however, among the hurried hordes of people paid by the week, who shoved through the doors, flopped into seats and briefly scribbled brief orders, Anthony had found himself not only a king dethroned but a king despised, brushed by, stared at, glared at, blared at!

The shock had sent his egotism crashing and had reduced his spirits to a low and melancholy ebb. Even in the days of the Chop House he had leaned toward solemnity—partly because at the tender age of fifteen a thoughtless baseball had removed two of his front teeth; partly because he had been wise enough to realize that when a waiter laughs, or a policeman smiles, or a naval officer discards his uniform for civilian's clothes, or a clergyman leaves off his round collar, ideals are apt to be broken.

Gliding back and forth in the warm atmosphere of the Chop House, however, Anthony had smiled inwardly at love making, at fads and follies, at old

men trying to appear young, at young men trying to appear old. In the Eating Place, the sordid clatter and clamor, the trumpet-like laughter and unmodulated voices, drowned every delicate and elusive undertone.

He pined for the eager gluttony of the over-fed, for the luxurious eating of the epicure, for the dainty fretfulness of the pampered. Again to remove the silver cover from a steaming dish! Again to bend discreetly over a tinted menu card! Again to skim to and fro, guided by the seductive rhythm of a hidden orchestra!

His reflective yearnings were broken in upon one evening by an unexpected light in the form of a wistful Lady. She appeared at the Eating Place during the "rush" hour of dinner, paused on the threshold, glanced timidly around, and then—joy of joys!—looked at Anthony.

Instantly, he realized that the Lady, by some prank of fate, had strayed from his beloved world of the people who knew how to enter, how to order, and how to eat. He sprang forward and led her to a small table. She followed! He pulled out a chair. She accepted it! He placed a bill of fare before her. She gravely gave him her order! Anthony could have fallen to his knees and folded his hands in pious joy. The Lady knew how!

Beaming upon her from the corners of his respectful eyes, he saw that her eyes were blue and shadowed, that her hands were delicate, that her mouth was sensitive and proud. Pride, he imagined, was at once her support and her protection. Although she ordered a meager dinner, although the people paid by the week stared at her, pride kept her eyes bright and tearless. Pride enabled her to walk steadily through the glare, and to catch back the door when a fat woman let it slam behind her.

Anthony had not been able to reach the door in time. But after that first evening, when the Lady became a regular patron—perhaps because the uncommonly good food at the Eating Place atoned for its common glare—Anthony was always at the door when she appeared and when she departed.

The Lady was like a breath from home to the suffering spirit of Anthony. She created the old atmosphere of romance and roses; and whenever he bowed her from the din of the Eating Place he was, in spirit, luxuriating in the Chop House and in the service to its patrons—particularly, in the service to a Gentleman, who had often occupied a seat at table number 3. The Gentleman, in addition to being well-bred, well-groomed and well-mannered, had possessed a charming way of letting romance into Anthony's life, knowing just how far to go and just how far to let Anthony go.

Indulging in a melancholy monologue, the Gentleman, on one memorable occasion, had told Anthony a fanciful story. "Anthony," the Gentleman had said, staring over the rim of his wine glass, "what would you do if you loved a lady and a lady loved you and the course of true love were running smoothly, when all of a sudden the lady lost her wealth and grew proud, and wore shabby little hats, and became intensely interested in shop windows when your wretchedly wealthy car spun by? Would you fling your money to the hounds, or would you snatch the lady, willy-nilly, from before the shop windows and carry her off to Happyland?"

Anthony had rubbed his chin in nonplused silence, which had passed successfully for reflective wisdom.

"'Tis a strange world, Anthony." The Gentleman had seemed to brood upon its strangeness and to lose his appetite. "If we dislike anyone, we are able to appear appropriately nonchalant; if we are indifferent to anyone, we are able to appear becomingly courteous; but if we love anyone,"—the Gentleman had waxed tragic,—"if we admire, adore, idolize anyone, we appear like clowns! wild men! monkeys on sticks! cows in conservatories!"

He had actually groaned as Anthony had removed his plate; and had spoken again, vehemently, when Anthony had returned with the salad.

"Money," the Gentleman had declared, "is the most loathsome possession in the world. Money and pride—flee,

flee from these cardinal barriers of joy."

Congratulating himself on the Gentleman's mood—he had always been lavish after indulging in monologues—Anthony had bowed; while the Gentleman, whose depression upon this particular evening had seemed uplifting, apparently had tasted ashes and sawdust in his mouth. Quite suddenly, he had arisen, thrust a bill into Anthony's palm, and had hurried away, frowning in a desperate, well-bred fashion as he went.

With the same faithfulness and sympathy with which Anthony had worshiped the Gentleman, he now worshiped the Lady; and he imagined, as he drew out her chair one stormy evening when the Eating Place was crowded by people who ate, drank and made merry in all sorts and conditions of weather, that the world was rushing at the Lady, and that the Lady was trembling away from the world—that poverty was a new experience to her, that she had been trained to gather roses, to wear beautiful gowns, to brood before huge piles of glowing coals.

The pathos of her position so affected Anthony that he hurried to the door and gazed solemnly toward the street, hoping to regain his poise by watching the panorama outside. As he stood there, he saw a large automobile whiz by the Eating Place, return, stop, and—Anthony started violently—the Gentleman, his own gentleman from the Chop House, spring from the car, glance toward the Eating Place, and then come hurrying in.

Too stunned to move, Anthony nursed a fleeting impression that the people who knew how to order had missed him and had sent the most delectable of their class to petition his return. Then, recovering from the shock, he sprang forward.

"Anthony!" murmured the Gentleman. "Do my eyes deceive me?"

Anthony bowed; and, instinctively realizing that birds of a feather should flock together, he led the Gentleman to the corner where the Lady sat. The effect of this was unexpected; the instant that the Gentleman discovered the Lady, he halted, turned pale and evinced great

agitation; and the instant that the Lady perceived the Gentleman, she turned crimson, caught her breath and shrank back into her chair.

In a flash, Anthony's memory was stirred by the story of the lady who had lost her wealth; and he saw that instant action was necessary. He whisked out a chair, from a table directly opposite the Lady's, adroitly seated the Gentleman, and himself attended to the important matter of the Gentleman's dinner.

But the Gentleman seemed incapable of ordering. He looked at the Lady, at her shadowed blue eyes, at her delicate hands, at her proud and sensitive mouth. He looked at her shabby hat. His gaze was at once reproachful and agonized.

Gingerly holding a bill of fare, Anthony murmured: "They serve good food, sir. You can order anything you please. But there's no wine list. Will you begin with Blue Points, sir?"

The Gentleman encountered the Lady's glance, endeavored to bow, received an icy look—and became an object pitiful to behold.

Anthony repeated his question.

"Blue Points?" said the Gentleman blankly. "Yes, Anthony, Blue Points."

"And soup, sir?—their chicken broth is really excellent. And fish?—their Kennebec salmon is eatable. And roast chicken? and asparagus on toast? and—"

"Yes, Anthony. That's it. Get out!"

The exclamation was the climax of a line between the Lady's pretty brows. Anthony sped kitchenward. He was in his element again. His agility returned. He adorned the Blue Points with little cubes of lemon.

As he placed them, with the old graceful curve of his hand, before the Gentleman, Anthony's eyes rested upon the Lady. Another waiter, a flat-headed, sordid, untemperamental Italian, was putting her dinner on the table.

The Lady had ordered baked beans and bread and butter.

Anthony saw the Gentleman's gaze alight upon the Lady's dinner—saw him start, as if the whole well-bred heart of him cried out, "Is that what you have to eat?" Anthony also saw the Lady glance at the Blue Points, turn white, and then,

with a proud uplifting of her head, endeavor to eat her beans. But the situation proved too much for her. After four or five choking mouthfuls, she snatched up her gloves, got to her feet and hurried blindly away.

The Gentleman sprang up. And then, perhaps because the tilt of the Lady's head was so undeniably proud, he dropped back into his chair and glared at the Blue Points. His anguish was so real that Anthony longed to take him into his arms. Instead, he bore the untouched Blue Points to the kitchen, and mournfully devoured them.

When he returned with the soup, he found the Gentleman inactive from despair. Evidently considering the situation from all sides, the Gentleman clasped his forehead with his hands, clasped his chin, and afterwards, seeming to lose heart, hope and resolution, let both hands fall, in a slightly idiotic but entirely well-bred fashion, to his sides and hang there—while Anthony placed food on the table, waited a reasonable length of time, and then removed it to the kitchen, and mournfully devoured it.

When the coffee made its appearance, the Gentleman started from his musing, looked hard at Anthony, seemed to find the sympathy he craved, and said in tense tones:

"Does—she come here every evening?"

Anthony bowed, emotionally and well.

The Gentleman drew a reckless bill from his pocket. "Serve her," was all he said. But the break in his voice and the hunger on his face implied that he would give his joy in this world and his hope of the next to be able to serve her himself.

Very tenderly, Anthony put the Gentleman into his overcoat, presented him his hat and cane, held open the door, and watched him enter his wretchedly wealthy car and shoot wretchedly up the street. Afterward, Anthony wondered if the Lady's pride would now force her to stay away from the Eating Place, or if the Gentleman would be so weakened by pain that further torture upon his emotions could not be inflicted.

But the Gentleman's constitution proved like rubber; for the next evening, fully an hour before the Lady was apt to dine, he came bounding up the street. He had left his car at home. He wore a plain, dark suit. He looked as if he had spent one half the night tossing on his pillow, and the other half imagining that the pillow was pride, and pounding it.

Entering, he cast a tensely questioning look at Anthony, who shook his head and led the way toward the corner where the Lady usually sat. The Gentleman, rendered dumb by the mere sight of the little table that had been glorified by her presence, dropped into his chair.

"Blue Points, sir?" murmured Anthony.

"No!" the Gentleman groaned.

"Beans, Anthony; beans!"

"Sir?"

The Gentleman groaned again. "One pitiful little plate of beans and one pitiful portion of bread and butter!"

Alarmed by the wild misery in the Gentleman's tone, Anthony retired. On his return from giving in the humiliating order, he sprang forward.

The Lady was coming through the door.

By the power of his persuasive smile, Anthony managed to lead her to her usual place; and he himself attended to the important matter of the Lady's dinner. Gingerly holding a bill of fare, he waited respectfully at her elbow.

The Lady, very proud, very pretty, after one fleeting glance toward the Gentleman—who had stiffened in the most distressing fashion in his chair—said in dignified tones:

"Blue Points."

Anthony grew chilly.

"Blue Points," repeated the Lady, "and soup, and fish, and salad, and—"

Her words trailed off, because the mere sound of her voice was lifting the Gentleman to a state of ecstasy in which he was making a spectacle of himself. To see him pale and wan, clutching the tablecloth with one hand and gazing at the Lady, was, in itself, enough to render anybody dumb. It rendered the Lady dumb. It rendered Anthony, fleeing ig-

nominiously toward the kitchen, dumb and apprehensive.

In the same minute that Anthony placed the Blue Points before the Lady, the flat-headed, sordid, untemperamental Italian waiter served baked beans and bread and butter to the Gentleman.

To Anthony, the situation was most unhappy. He saw in the Lady's order a proud determination to deceive the world—and the Gentleman—as to the conditions of her shabby purse; and in the Gentleman's order, a desperate attempt to assure the world—and the Lady—that he loved beans better than great possessions. Standing on one foot, with hands clasped sympathetically behind him, Anthony fastened mild eyes upon the objects of his admiration.

The situation, left discreetly alone, adjusted itself: When the Lady saw what the Gentleman had ordered, and the Gentleman saw what the Lady had ordered, their lips twitched, their eyes lightened, and quite without warning they laughed. Afterward they looked straight at one another—looked until the Lady, blushing and tremulous, seemed to lose her pride and find her wealth again—a better kind of wealth; and the Gentleman seemed to discover in the falling of her shadowed eyes the surrender he had despaired of.

Anthony displayed instant appreciation of what had occurred by whisking the beans and bread and butter to the Lady's table. Whereupon, the Gentleman sprang to his feet, the Lady smiled—and the noise-filled, too-light Eating

Place became like a garden of roses drowned in twilight. Beside the Lady's table, the Gentleman leaned down and spoke to her; for a moment she seemed overwhelmed, confused—then she lifted her eyes to his and bravely answered him.

"Shall I serve you with Blue Points, sir?" questioned Anthony.

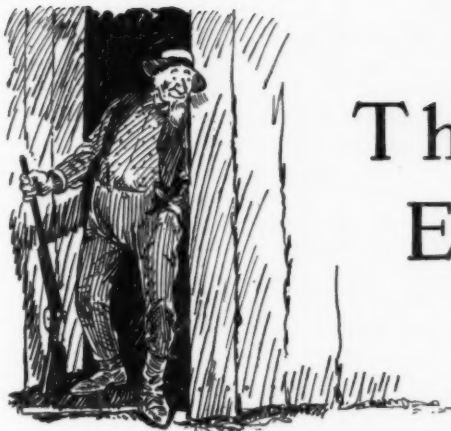
"No," laughed the Gentleman, snatching up the Lady's wrap, "we'll finish our dinner at the Chop House."

As he spoke, he pressed a generous bill into Anthony's palm, intimating by a radiant glance that a good word regarding Anthony would be spoken to the manager of the Chop House.

True to his temperament—and to his teeth—Anthony merely bowed. Experiences like these were not new to him. How many generous bills had been pressed into his palm! how many radiant glances had thrilled him with the illusion of the moment! how many couples had gone from him, as the Lady and the Gentleman went now, remembering even to send him a smile from the doorway! How many of the promises had been fulfilled? How many couples, once in the rose-colored world outside, had remembered the heart that had sympathized with them, the mind that had maneuvered for them, the smile that had persuaded them to turn in the right direction? How many?—ah, how many?

Oppressed by an overwhelming melancholy, Anthony removed the Blue Points to the kitchen, and mournfully devoured them.

THERE is no humorist in the country who equals GEORGE FITCH in his own line of story. And George Fitch has never written a story with as many laughs to the square inch as "Paresis vs. Patriotism." It will be a feature of the August RED BOOK MAGAZINE.



A Three-Horse Elopement

By
BARTON WOOD CURRIE

Author of "The Love Record," etc.

Illustrated by HORACE TAYLOR



THERE'S been on'y one erlope-mint in this township in ten years (quoth Chairman Si Perkins of the Cedar Grove Board of Poultry Trade), an' that were in the case o' Millie Holsapple an' Bashful Jim Cism. It were the most excitin' erlope-mint I ever hearn tell on, an' the three horses what figgered in it were ruined total an' 've been out in pasture ever sence.

You see it warn't no more necessary fer Jim Cism to erlope with Millie Holsapple nor it is fer a woodchuck to play music on a cornet. Millie's folks didn't have no objection agin Jim Cism, an' Jim oughter knowed it. She were an on'y child an' all that, but she were thirty-seven year old an' gittin' raspy an' cantankerous. She didn't do nothin' 'round the house but read novels an' sniff an' talk about dukes an' barons an' ladies o' the lake an' knights in armor, an' all that kind o' book-writ stuff.

She were a right pretty girl, in her younger day; an' she could hev married any out o' half a dozen widowers with middlin' good farms; but she laughed at the hull o' them, an' said that her man had to have yeller, curly hair, an' wear a

Jim tied his horse to the apple tree, and went on in arter the ladder. If he'd looked around a little closer, he'd hev seen Hiram Holsapple's head sticken out o' the barn door, lookin' on

sword onto his side. I reckon she'd forgot them specifercations by the time she made her mind up to Jim Cism, fer he aint never wore anythin' onto his side 'ceptin' a sickle an' a whettin' stone. As fer his hair, he aint got none an' his bald head goes up to a peak.

Not that Jim didn't have his good p'int. There warnt a squarer man in dealin's an' tradin's this side o' the Bloomfield meadows, an' he kept up his fences an' his barns fastidjus. The fact o' the matter were that all the Cedar Grove an' Thumb Point widders had been still-huntin' him clear around the Gooseberry Circuit fer ten year, when Millie Holsapple sort o' went into the race as a dark entry an' won under wraps. How she done it were one o' the seven wonders o' Cedar Grove, fer if you'd hev listened to the widders talk about her, you'd hev thought she were the worst favored female what ever wore

petticoats. Some o' them disapp'inted widders said she used spells an' charms an' love waters an' sich, but I guess if the truth were told she didn't use nothin' more nor a sugary smile an' a flattery tongue. She'd learned all about the special valyer o' them weepers out o' the books she read, an' she could talk the seeds out o' a watermelon. I'm statin' that onto the word o' Parson Hippie, an' if he aint a jedge o' the latitudes an' longitudes o' conversation it aint becuz he aint tried 'em out to the last partikular limits.

But Millie Holsapple warnt satisfied with roundin' up Jim Cism till he were pantin' anxious to throttle himself with the yoke o' matrimony. Millie'd been waitin' so ding busted long fer one o' them knights into armor an' battlin' dukes that she couldn't come down to leadin' Jim quiet and easy up the aisle o' Eliphalet Hippie's church in sight o' them r'arin' an' fumin' widders. As she told my mis-sus arterwards, if she'd hev married old Gerald Blossom onto his death-bed, she'd had to have a drum-beatin' weddin' if it made her a widder afore her weddin' ring were warm.

O' course, that warnt the way she put it up to Jim Cism. She knew Jim better nor that. He'd hev set her down as plumb looney an' gone West, as he threatened when them widders took to bakin' pies an' crullers into his own kitchen. She were one o' them crafty, trap-settin' kind, an' Jim were into the web afore he could take invoice or sound-in's. One night into the midst o' their cooin's an' dovin's she told him her

father, old Hiram Holsapple, had took a vi'lent an' murderin' dislike to him an' they'd have to erlope.

"That is," she says, wheedlin' an' coaxin' an' rubbin' her cheek agin his, "if you love me ernuff to take the risk."

Under them present an' partikeler circumstances, Jim Cism warnt capable o' cool reason an' says yes. Jest before he's goin' home, though, his mind sort o' settles down an' he speaks out:

"You must've been funnin' about your paw, Millie. I've known Hiram Holsapple thirty years an' we always been good friends. On'y yestiddy he slaps me on the back an' most pumps my hand off."

"It's been terrible sudden, Jim," says Millie, chokin' an' forcin' a chain o' tears down her cheek. "It's come onto him like a stroke. Me an' maw had to go down onto our knees to him to keep him from breakin' into the parlor this evenin' an' actin' vi'lent."

Jim Cism let go the grip he had 'round Millie's waist an' begin breathin' hard. Waitin' for her first words to sink in, she goes on: "He talked agin you like a wild man, Jim, an' he said he'd see me buried afore I were wed to Jim Cism. Mebbe some o' them widders has been tellin' lies an'

scandals about you. But let 'em talk, Jim, darling," she whimpers, grabbin' him close. "You're mine till death do us part an' you kin come 'round to-morrer arter midnight with the buggy whilst paw an' maw is asleep. Love kin find a way, Jim," she winds up, snugglin' into his arms an' actin' like she'd fainted.

"But Millie," Jim Cism objects, "let me talk it over with your paw. It wunt take me more'n ten minutes to prove to him that any words them widders say agin me is a pack o' jibberin' lies. I'll



Millie could have married any out o' half a dozen widowers, but she said her man had to have yeller curly hair and wear a sword on his side

have the law agin the hull flock o' them fer slander if he wunt take my word."

"I don't blame you, Jim, fer not believin' me," blubbers Millie, stiffenin' up outer her faint. "Poor paw, it's awful. It come onto him suddent as p'ison. I don't ask you to take my word onto it alone, Jim. Paw'll be down to Gus Meyer's store fer the mail to-morrer mornin'. You kin see then what's come over him, on'y fer my sake don't rile him. There aint no knowin' how wild he'd git."

Afore she got through with Jim Cism that night she'd made him believe total an' peculiar every lyin' word she spoke. Yes, an' she makes him agree onto all the details o' that erlopemint. If he got a wink o' sleep subsequent it come to him whilst his eyes was pop open an' every nerve into his body jumpin'.

But if Jim Cism were knocked cold by the news that Hiram Holsapple had been p'isoned agin him, the shock were on'y passin' mild to the jolt old Hiram hisself got when his daughter unfolds to him the plans o' that erlopemint.

"All you got to do, paw," she says, "is to growl an' look murderin' wild at him. If he attempts to argy, don't listen to him. Turn away like a bull-snortin' beef critter an' come up home."

Hiram Holsapple slumped limp as an empty sack. The flyin' off o' the top o' his head couldn't hev made him feel worse.

"Millie Holsapple," he whispers when he kin, "it aint to be did. Your maw an' me've been spekerlatin' onto this marriage o' yourn as the happiest event into our lives. You been bleatin' an' mopin' 'round this house fer twenty year, sighin' an' mumblin' about love an' lovers, an' now you've landed one proper, an' the most likely single man into the county, you want to carry on like a dinged

circus an' ruin the hull thing. I wunt stand fer it. You got to marry like folks, or there wunt be no weddin'."

He were fierce an' high-spoken afore he got to the end o' that speech, but he oughter've seen that gal o' hisn a-settin' an' a-grittin' her teeth.

"Paw," she cut him off, "I'm a-goin' to have that there erlopemint or there wunt be no weddin'. If you want me to go down into my grave a worretin' an' frettin' old maid, all right."

Then all on a suddent she breaks into a fierce fit o' weepin', threshin' her arms over her head, tearin' at her hair an' stampin' with her feet.

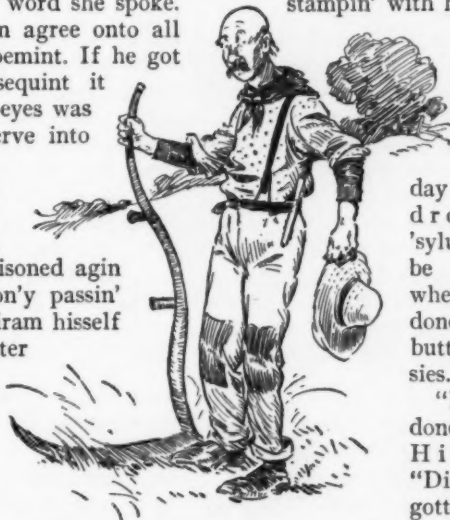
"You better do it, paw," sighs Mirandy Holsapple, "fer she'll go on like that day arter day till we're all drove off to the 'sylum. Mebbe it kin be done quiet, an' when it's done it's done, thank all the buttercups an' daisies."

"How kin it be done quiet?" rants Hiram Holsapple. "Didn't she say I gotter drive the team arter the buggy an' holler an' shoot. Kin shootin' be done quiet?"

Mirandy Holsapple allowed some shootin' could be done quieter nor other shootin'.

"But why has there got to be any shootin' into it?" wails Hiram. "Let 'em erlope if it's gotter be. Let 'em burn up the road into Jim Cism's buggy an' drive clear through the side o' the parson's house if they gotter have excitement an' hair-raisin'. What is the thunderin' an' drummin' good o' my racin' half a mile arter 'em on'y to swing round into Ludlum Lane an' come home?"

"You gotter do it, paw, to make it reg'lar," that daughter o' Hiram's kept



Jim Cism never wore anythin' onto his side ceptin' a sickle and a whettin' stone. As fer his hair, he aint got none

whinnyin', an' her mother backed her up till he was all wore out an' dropped his hands.

"All right," he says, final an' kinder nasty, "if there's gotter be shootin', there's a-goin' to be shootin'."

Hiram Holsapple carried out the first part o' the specifercations dealin' with his greetin's to Jim Cism at the store better'n his daughter oughter hoped fer. When Jim stepped up to him an' said, "Howdy, Hiram," Hiram jest missed bitin' 'im. He snapped at him like a lynx up a tree an' turned away whistlin' an' hissin' through his teeth. Jim had made his mind up to have it out with him an' learn which o' the widders had been slanderin' him, but the way Hiram Holsapple chopped him off set back every idea into his brain three days. It were a mighty wonder, in view o' the circumstances, that he ever showed up that night fer the erlopemint.

But it's a matter o' record an' public notoriety that he showed up. He arrives about two A. M. with a fresh young colt what he called Horace, arter his grandfather, a horse with a good pedigree an' a high, fast action o' the forelegs. He

tied Horace to the apple tree 'longside the pasture gate back o' the barn an' then he went on in arter the ladder. He'd already seen Millie in her winder, waggin' a candle to an' fro, an' if he'd looked 'round a little closer he'd hev seen Hiram Holsapple's head stickin' out o' the barn door lookin' on. Hiram had been waitin' three hours, with his team hitched up ready to shoot out o' the barn like a fire truck. It were Hiram's best team, Wallace an' Walter.

Durin' the two hours Hiram Holsapple had been into the barn, he had loaded an' primed his old duck musket till it were full o' gunpowder clear to the spout. He warnt able to see how much powder he were puttin' into that gun in the dark an' he warnt able to judge certain till it went off. It were a two-barreled gun, an' all that saved Hiram's life were the fact that on'y one o' them barrels went off to oncet. He shot it off sideways, over the dashboard, jest as Jim Cism were turnin' the bend o' the turnpike down by Rollo Rollins' chicken house. Jim hadn't any warnin' o' pursuit up to that minute, an' Horace were equal ignorant.





Hiram snapped at him like a lynx up a tree.

Jim oughter known better nor to give Horace the whip under them circumstances. The shock o' that gun explodin' sounded to Horace like it were under his feet an' he pretty near swallowed the bit afore he gripped it into his teeth an' lifted the buggy clear o' the stone bridge without touchin' a wheel.

But Horace were on'y one horse, whilst Wallace an' Walter were two, an' there was two passengers behind Horace to one behind Wallace an' Walter—in consequence o' which it warnt nat'ral that Horace could hev kept the lead o' that rampagin' team fer more'n a mile.

O' course, it were in the plans o' the erlopemint that Hiram Holsapple, arter shootin' an' hollerin' fer half a mile, would turn into Ludlum Lane. But—he never seen Ludlum Lane go by.

The minute Millie Holsapple heard that old musket go off she give a little scream. "Paw's comin'—paw's comin'," she hollers, an' then allows to faint into Jim Cism's arms. That were the key-rect method o' the thing, accordin' to all her readin's on the subject, but as it

happens Jim Cism haint got no arm free fer faintin' passengers an' he pretty near shakes Millie's bangs down as he grabs her an' says: "Sit up an' holt on. Do your faintin's arterwards."

This were on'y the startin' breach into the erlopemint specifercations o' Millie Holsapple. Jest when she figgered her paw had turned into Ludlum Lane, she heard the fierce poundin' o' hoofs behind an' the snortin' an' swearin' o' her paw. Lookin' over her shoulder she could see Wallace an' Walter comin' like a whirlwind. That aint to say Horace warnt movin'. That colt o' Jim Cism's were breakin' out sparks under all four hoofs an' the action o' his hind legs was as high an' fast as the tearin' pace o' his forelegs. His tail were lashin' an' sweepin' across Jim Cism's face an' Jim were a-talkin' at him in language equal to that o' Hiram Holsapple's.

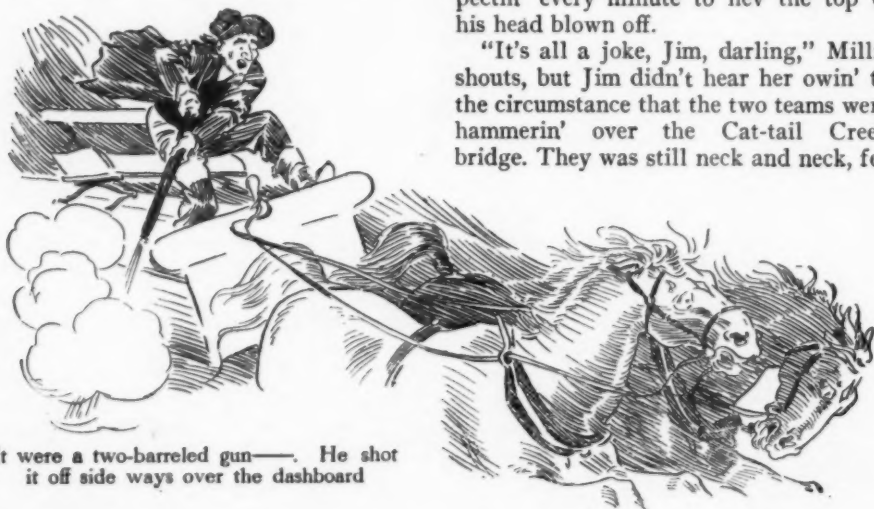
The two rigs were neck an' neck when they come to the Great Notch toll-gate. If it hadn't been fer a piece o' the gate which caught in his whiskers, Hiram

Holsapple wouldn't hev known he'd crossed the town limits o' Cedar Grove. Ira Notter, the gate keeper, were asleep at the time, an' the two rigs an' the gate were gone afore he were full awake. Not knowin' the circumstances, he re-

aint ser'us." That romantikal young woman were wakin' up to the fact that her erlopemint plans had been busted an' she might as well call it off.

"He wunt shoot, eh!" Jim Cism hissed back, still keepin' his eyes front an' expectin' every minute to hev the top o' his head blown off.

"It's all a joke, Jim, darling," Millie shouts, but Jim didn't hear her owin' to the circumstance that the two teams were hammerin' over the Cat-tail Creek bridge. They was still neck and neck, fer



It were a two-barreled gun——. He shot it off side ways over the dashboard

ports next day that the gate were struck by a shootin' star whilst he were oilin' the hinges. He give the dimensions an' color o' that star an' describes how it come down out o' the Little Dipper jest as if he'd made a photograph of it. He swore solemn an' unblinkin' that he were thrown thirty feet into the air when that shootin' star hit the gate.

As partikeler everdence o' the speed o' them two teams, there warnt a scratch onto 'em notwithstanding' what happened to that one-barred gate. The two buggies was most touchin', one to t' other, when they swung round the turnpike an' headed fer Little Falls. Hiram Holsapple didn't say nothin' to Jim Cism an' Jim Cism didn't say nothin' to Hiram Holsapple, but when Jim Cism saw that big musket stickin' up over the dashboard o' Hiram's buggy, his face went white as swan's feathers. "Gidap!" he whistled through his teeth to Horace, jest as if Horace hadn't pretty near et up the bit an' weren't runnin' like a ragin' bull.

"He wunt shoot, Jim, dear," Millie Holsapple shouts into Jim's ear. "He

Horace came o' a racin' dam an' sire an' were lettin' hisself out, flesh, fur an' feathers.

There were a loose plank into that Cat-tail Creek bridge which pretty near jumped the buggies offen their wheels. Hiram Holsapple's rig got the worst o' the bump an' the old musket leaps out onto the road an' goes off. Jim Cism could see the gleam o' that musket as it cavorts out o' Hiram's buggy an' he could see the flash burst out o' the barrel. While the shock an' report pretty near ruined his ear drums it took a big load offen his mind when he figgers he's still alive.

If Wallace an' Walter an' Horace had been runnin' afore, it warnt nothin' 'longside o' the goin' they worked up to arter passin' over the Cat-tail Creek bridge. Millie Holsapple's portmanter an' weddin' trusser dropped off in front o' the town hall at Signac. Jim Cism's grip were bumped into the Passaic at Mountain View. By the time that erlopemint expedition come up into Essex Falls, day was breakin' an' all the roosters on that side o' Big Tooth Moun-

tain were crowin' wild an' hilar'us.

Parson Drumm o' Essex Falls hadn't expected the erlopers afore four o'clock, but he warnt a-goin' to take no chances o' missin' a erlopermint fee o' ten dollars an' he were lookin' up the road when them two teams come along.

"A double erlopermint," Parson Drumm chuckles to hisself, an' in his mind he begun depositin' twenty dollars in the Caldwell savin's bank. But he on'y got to the point o' foldin' the money into his bank book an' passin' it into the winder when he wakes up into a cloud o' dust, an' his financial opportunities is vanished. They was gone an' his dream spoilt afore the smile he brought up could sink.

A change come over Jim Cism arter that old musket bumped out of Hiram Holsapple's buggy. The second explosion o' that musket were pretty near

long 'longside o' Jim Cism's fast-step-pin' Horace. Therefer, when that easy-go-lucky team o' hissn lights out into the lead he couldn't help hisself from wormin' his head 'round an' grinnin' over his shoulder at Jim Cism.

"S' long, Jim," Hiram laughs sarcastic; then he turns his head back an' bends over the reins.

It were the first time in four years that any man or boy in a buggy had ever said, "S' long, Jim," to Jim Cism, fer Jim had a stableful o' fast pacin' mares an' geldin's. He were a three-time winner at the county fair an' had a reputation fer gittin' every inch o' speed out o' a horse what were into it. Consequent, when Hiram Holsapple laughs that challenge over his shoulder, Jim Cism looses hisself into the race, bends over the dashboard an' begins to drive.

"Go on, Horace; go on," he rasps out, an' Horace goes on. The load Horace was pullin' were one hundred pounds lighter owin' to the loss out o' the bug-



Horace gripped the bit into his teeth and lifted the buggy clear o' the stone bridge without touchin' a wheel

under Wallace an' Walter an' the spring they give for'ard puts 'em most a length ahead o' Horace, all o' which sets fire to Jim Cism's sportin' blood. This change o' position arter runnin' neck an' neck fer three miles has a similar stimulin' effect on Hiram Holsapple. He'd done a lot o' buggy racin' in his younger days an' he were keen fer the sport. He'd never raced Wallace an' Walter an' he'd never calkerlated they could run a fur-

gy o' Millie's trusser an' Jim's gripsack. Jim were total ignorant o' the joltin' out o' that weddin' luggage. That were nat'ral ernuff. That he were similar insenseless o' the joltin' out o' Millie Holsapple on'y goes to prove that when Jim Cism's sporting blood were up—it were up.

Comin' down through Caldwell an' headin' back fer Cedar Grove, Horace pulls up even with Wallace and Walter.



He reports next day how the gate was hit by a shootin' star

The two teams had been carryin' even weight most a mile. To specerfy partikeler, it were on a sharp turn a mile west o' Caldwell Cedars where Millie got out. Jim's buggy took the turn on one wheel an' Millie lost her holt. Jim were pretty near blinded by Hiram Holsapple's dust or he couldn't hev missed seein' the way Millie ris up an' spun into the air. She give a sharp squeal, but if she'd shot off a battery o' cannon an' rung a fire bell, her paw an' Jim Cism wouldn't hev heard it. The racin' fire o' all the Holsapples an' all the Cisms were a-boilin' in their blood.

Millie Holsapple were mighty lucky in landin' so soft in a bed o' rushes. She come home by the back road an' across pastures an' went up to her room to do her faintin's an' weepin's—which she conducts silent an' sorrowful, accordin' to a new method.

Jim an' Hiram were back on the Pompton turnpike when Horace made his last spurt an' passed Wallace an' Walter.

"S' long Hiram," laughs Jim over his shoulder, an' Hiram Holsapple gritted his teeth an' yelled at his team. There were still one desp'rate spurt left into Wallace an' Walter an' they made it, pullin' up level with Horace agin in front o' Gus Meyer's store an' bringin' tears o' joy to the eyes o' Hiram Holsapple. He were jest gittin' ready to say, "S' long, Jim," to Jim Cism agin, when all three o' them horses stopped plumb still an' looked at each other. Then all three o' them sat down, pantin' an' steamin'.

"Dead heat!" shouts Jim an' Hiram in the same breath—whereat they jumped down out o' the buggies an' shook hands.

"And it were on'y then, jest arter they broke grip, that they missed Millie! She were the meekest lookin' bride what ever took the vows o' matrimony in Cedar Grove when she were finally married to Jim. An', as the sayin' goes, she's et outer Jim Cism's hand ever sence.

THE DRAMA OF THE SUMMER TIME



by Louis

V. De Foe

Photograph by White, New York

Charles Hawtrey as *Charles Ingleton* and Enid Leslie as *Agnes Fishbourne* in "Dear Old Charlie"

AMONG the distinguished English comedians whose occasional visits to this country are always awaited with pleasant anticipation is Mr. Charles Hawtrey. His absence of seven years, since his great success in "A Messenger From Mars," far from blotting him from the minds of theatre-goers, assured him a warm welcome, for, although we always

have among us Mr. John Drew, whom he somewhat resembles in method, it may as well be admitted that the whole English speaking stage just now cannot produce his equal in those facile, graceful rôles of light, breezy comedy which, though commonly undervalued, are among the most difficult that fall to a dramatic artist.

"Dear Old Charlie," the farce which

Mr. Hawtrey has brought from abroad for the display of his talents, claims precedence in this summary of the events of the season's fag-end, not so much because it is distinguished for especial freshness or ingenuity as for the reason that it is suited to the whimsical spirit which is supposed to rule in the theatre in early summer. It is an adaptation by Mr. Charles H. Brookfield of "*Celimare*

le Bien-Aime," from the French of M. Eugene Labiche, which, though popular when it was first produced in Paris, has been slow in reaching the stage in anglicized form. And thereby hangs a tale at the expense of that solemnly moral and irritating official of the English Crown, the Censor of Plays, whom the pugnacious Mr. George Bernard Shaw takes such infinite delight in anathematizing.

Long before Mr. Brookfield was elevated to the post of guardian of the moral welfare of the English people in the theatre he was a plain, practical dramatist who no doubt shared the

same low estimate of the Censor that is now held by the whole fraternity of English playwrights, managers and actors.

The fact that Labiche's play contained not one



Photograph by White, New York
Charles Hawtrey as *Charles Ingleton*, Mabel Young
as *Mrs. Fishbourne*, and—

but two of the usual French triangles of domestic intrigue did not prejudice him against it when it fell into his hands. Having put its clandestine relationships through the deodorizing process of adaptation and renamed the play "Dear Old Charlie," he submitted it to the Censor, who promptly interdicted it as unfit for sensitive English morals.

The intervening years have seen a change in sentiment regarding the French triangle. A steady dose of the three-cornered domestic relationship on the stage has inured theatre-goers to its unpleasant insinuations and transformed the intruder, masculine or feminine, at the third angle, from a tragic to a comic factor in the domestic embroglio. So "Dear Old Charlie," as it emerges on the stage, may be regarded as quite a harmless affair, despite the Gallic insinuations which

lie between the lines of the bright dialogue with which Mr. Brookfield has dressed its none too substantial plot.

Its hero is *Charles Ingleton*, one of those suave and amiably mendacious characters in the oily performance of which Mr. Hawtrey is always at his best. *Ingleton* has renounced his eventful and questionable bachelorhood, and, when the play begins, is about to marry *Agnes Fishbourne*, whose straight-laced father and mother look upon him with some distrust, and who herself has assured him that, if she discovers that he has ever loved another, she will straightway jump off Waterloo Bridge in despair.

The efforts of *Ingleton* to keep his past under cover and the falsehoods in which he involves himself when some of his old chickens threaten to come home to roost are the sources of most of the humor of the three acts. In other days, *Ingleton* has been secretly amusing himself with the wives of his two pals, *Gabriel Peploe*, and *Thomas Dumphy*. Each is aware that the other has been made a fool of, but neither suspects what has been going on when his own back was turned. And both of these deceived cronies now expect to receive the same hospitality in *Ingleton's* new home that they had offered him in theirs. On his part, *Ingleton* desires to break off his old friendships, especially since he still has some slight matters to settle with *Mrs. Peploe* and is using the lining of her husband's hat as a convenient means of his surreptitious correspondence with her.

The wedding day arrives, and *Ingleton* finds himself so harrassed by his unwelcome cronies that he is compelled to brand them as rouds to *Agnes* as an excuse for keeping them out of the house. At the same time, unknown to his wife, he must maintain with them a pretense of fast friendship. Gradually his glib lies enmesh him until he finds himself under the suspicion of his watchful mother-in-law, who has never been too sure of his moral pretensions. As for *Agnes*, she has an uncomfortable way of renewing her threat to commit suicide at the first revelation of questionable conduct on his part.

At last, escape from London seems to be *Ingleton's* only means of salvation and he makes elaborate preparations for a stealthy retreat to a cosy bungalow on the Thames where he hopes to spend his honeymoon in peace and safety. But no sooner has he settled down in quiet than his two well-



— Edmund Maurice as *Gabriel Peploe* in "Dear Old Charlie"

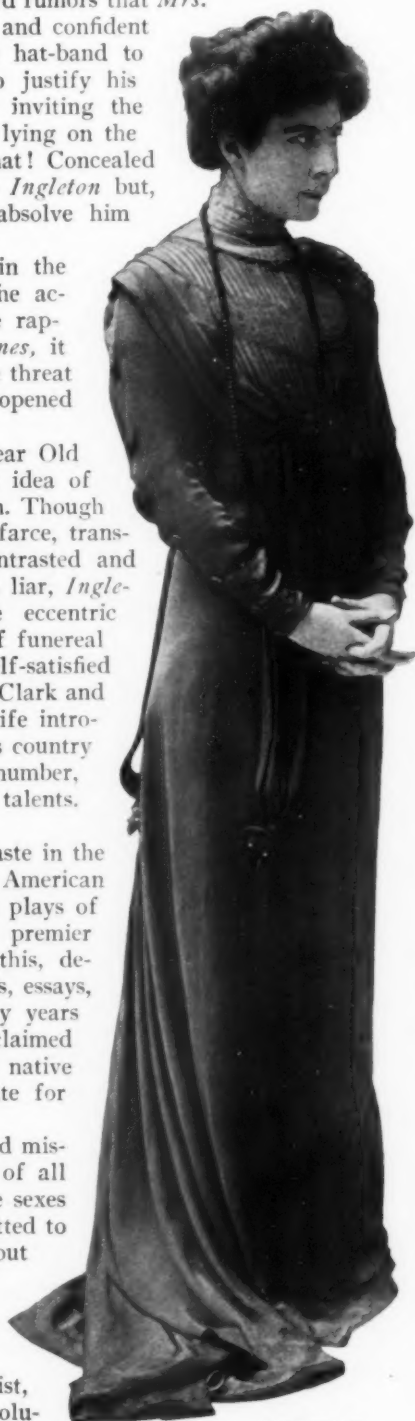
meaning tormentors seek him out, having learned his whereabouts from the grocer who furnishes his household supplies. Having heard rumors that *Mrs. Peploe* has begun to solace herself with another, and confident that she is again making use of her husband's hat-band to convey her love messages, *Ingleton* attempts to justify his reluctance to her acquaintance with *Agnes* by inviting the latter to search *Peploe's* new headgear, which is lying on the table. But it proves to be *Peploe's* last year's hat! Concealed beneath the band is a tender note addressed to *Ingleton* but, fortunately, bearing a date distant enough to absolve him at least from marital faithlessness.

There is relief for both of the newly-weds in the discovery. It enables *Ingleton* to brush away the accumulation of lies and contradictions which are rapidly driving him to distraction and, as for *Agnes*, it reveals that she is not disposed to keep the suicide threat that she has held over her husband. So the way is opened to a new understanding and reconciliation.

There is so little substance to the plot of "Dear Old Charlie" that its outline can give only a slight idea of the humorous vein in which its dialogue is written. Though the characters are mainly stock types of French farce, transferred to an English locale, they are well contrasted and amusingly drawn. Mr. Hawtrey as the audacious liar, *Ingleton*, is easy, plausible and ingratiating. The eccentric characters, *Peploe* and *Dumphie*, one an image of funereal solemnity and the other an embodiment of self-satisfied obtuseness, are capitably acted by Mr. E. Holman Clark and Mr. Edmund Maurice. The rôle of the young wife introduces a new and attractive English actress to this country in Miss Enid Leslie. The others, half a dozen in number, are not given much opportunity to display their talents.

IT is an odd commentary on our catholicity of taste in the theatre that not until the present time has the American stage presented in its own vernacular one of the plays of that cracked Scandinavian literary genius and premier woman-hater, Johann August Strindberg. And this, despite the fact that his accumulated dramas, novels, essays, poems and scientific studies in a career of forty years aggregate more than fifty volumes; that Zola acclaimed him and Ibsen envied him; and that in his native Sweden he has more than once been a candidate for the Nobel Prize.

The life history of this brilliant but unbalanced misogynist who would destroy the very foundation of all society by his crazy theory that "love between the sexes is strife" might read like a romance were I permitted to drift into extended biographical detail. Born out of wedlock, his father a University professor and his mother a servant woman, his early days were spent in poverty. Successively an indifferent student, a "super" in the theatre, a teacher, a journalist, a painter and a dramatist, his pessimism, his abnormal mind and his revolutionary social doctrines have thrice sent him to asy-



Photograph by
Rosalind Ivan as *Laura*.

lums. Each time he has emerged from these retreats to write scientific essays on his own malady. And until very lately his powerful, restless pen has never been idle. Three times also he has married, and the domestic upheavals which have ensued he has eagerly and minutely put into his plays and books.

Irresponsible genius such as Strindberg's must make itself heard, even if it cannot be believed. However false may seem his doctrines to the normal mind, the gruesome fascination which he contrives to weave into his abnormal, neurotic characters, and the intense power with which he builds up the climaxes of the conflicts in which he engages them,

gives his plays a peculiar grisly interest even though they leave their hearers disheartened and depressed. The struggles they introduce are of the sexes. All harp on Strindberg's obsession that in the conflicts of life the female of the species is more deadly than the male. If Ibsen in Norway preached the doctrine of hope-

lessness, Strindberg in Sweden proclaims the text of destruction.



White, New York
Warner Oland as *The Captain*, and Helen Pullman as *Bertha*, in "The Father"



Photograph by Alice Boughton

Edith Wynne Matthison, in the rôle of *A Peasant Woman (The Virgin Mary)*, in "The Terrible Meek"

The performance in New York of one of the most characteristic of these dramas, "The Father," has stirred a wave of interest in Strindberg's long neglected work quite unexpected even to the producers who undertook it. As a consequence it will be followed by other plays in his *répertoire*, in numbers sufficient to make advisable a knowledge of his peculiar dramaturgy among those interested in the doings of the theatre.

The scene of the action in "The Father" is the home of a scholarly but wrong-headed captain of cavalry in a Swedish army post. A short colloquy, as the curtain rises, between the officer and a subaltern accused of illegitimate parentage but unwilling to admit his responsibility for the wrong the victimized girl has suffered, immediately discloses to the audience the play's thesis, which is that nature cannot furnish absolute

proof of the masculine parentage of children.

The officer and his wife, *Laura*, are discovered to be at swords' points over almost every domestic problem, but especially over the method of educating their seventeen year old daughter, *Bertha*. The father, an agnostic, desires to send her away from home to be taught in accordance with his views. But the mother, who belongs to one of the Christian faiths, vehemently urges that she be permitted to rear her child under her own guidance.

Recriminations follow and a chance remark by the father concerning the uncertainty of parentage puts the needed ammunition into the mother's locker. When her husband argues that no man can be positive that he is the father of his wife's children, the wife boldly agrees and asserts that she too has been faithless. Her words take root in the officer's brilliant but unbalanced mind, and though she is quick to admit that she has lied, the seeds of his suspicion begin to grow.

Her husband's fears, *Laura* soon perceives, may be a means to her own ends. By the testimony of his doubts of her marital loyalty she contrives to convince the army surgeon that the man is losing his reason. Soon her moral nature is paralyzed by her instinct for her offspring's protection and she ruthlessly follows up the opportunity she has created to have herself appointed the child's legal guardian. The cleverness with which she twists her husband's actions and words into evidence that his mind is unsound succeed with those around her. Meanwhile she cunningly feeds his mental distress with her monstrous insinuations until his reason is actually dethroned and in frenzy he makes an attempt upon his daughter's life.

The systematic steps by which this Lucrezia Borgia of the North poisons her husband's reason until he is her helpless prey, repulsive as they are to every instinct of honesty and decency, supply the material for the gripping second act of the play. After it, in the third, comes the pitiful companion picture. The only creature whom the raving man will trust now is the aged servant who was his

nurse in childhood and in whom he still preserves a pathetic infantile-like faith. It is necessary to entice him into a straight-jacket which the surgeon has left in the house. The old woman is chosen to perform this last cruel duty. With words of cajolery and reminders of the distant, happy past, she coaxes him to put his arms into the garment. He does not suspect her purpose until she has made it secure at the back. Then it breaks upon him that the last woman in his little world in whom he has had faith has also proved false. He gives himself up to violent, incoherent ravings until apoplexy seizes him and he dies. Thus, according to Strindberg's monstrous theory, the female of the species is again triumphant over her inevitable victim, the male.

I would not want it to be inferred from this description that I have been victimized by Strindberg's trickery and false logic. Careful scrutiny of "The Father" will instantly unmask it as a dangerous example of special pleading. *Laura*, the wife, might perhaps be an actual product of life, but so abnormal is she that it is as preposterous as it is contemptible to represent her as a common type of her sex, or to use her as the basis of a social philosophy. As for the husband, he is created solely to play into the hands of his Nemesis at the dramatist's convenience. But such as they are, the characters are drawn with a vividness that proclaims their creator's genius. It would be folly to deny that they are the products of a great but warped intellect.

The acting of the play does not realize all its possibilities, although the interpretation of the implacable, cold, determined and relentless wife by Miss Rosalind Ivan is excellent. Mr. Warner Oland accomplishes less with the rôle of the husband, a character which offers great dramatic possibilities. The old nurse, in the present production, is given with nearly its full meaning by Miss Louise Dempsey; but other characters, including a surgeon, a pastor and lesser personages, all vividly and vitally drawn, are not particularly well embodied.

When "The Countess Julie" and "The

"Outlaw" are produced early next autumn the defects in the present company will probably be overcome. At any rate the first experiment with Strindberg's plays has proved that, however unhealthy and uncanny his art may be, it needs expert acting to bring out the intricate meanings of his characters.

THE new Little Theatre has begun to fulfill its promise to produce dramatic works of unusual form and special interest that for one reason or another would be denied hearing on the ordinary stages. In accordance with this policy, it has followed Mr. John Glasworthy's very excellent thesis-play, "The Pigeon," which I described in a previous issue of THE RED BOOK MAGAZINE, with "The Terrible Meek," by Mr. Charles Rann Kennedy—author of "The Servant in the

action passes on a stage wrapped in inky darkness, save for the occasional glimmer of a dim lantern.

First you hear a conversation in cockney English dialect between an army captain and a soldier of the ranks. They have been detailed to execute a prisoner, and with careless nonchalance not unmingled with profanity they are discussing the work in hand. Killing is their trade and they feel no moral scruples for their deed. They only did their duty, they contend. "They—the long-faced gentlemen down there—found him guilty." What crime had the prisoner committed? "It was riotin' an' stirrin' people up agen the government, as 'e on'y 'ad ter deal with." And again, "It was politics when I 'eard 'im. On'y it sahnded more like some rummy religion."

So runs the conversation. If you are not already familiar with the play you begin to suspect.

Out from the darkness is suddenly



Photograph by White, New York
Frank Reicher as *The Emperor Yuen-ti* in "The Flower of the Palace of Han"

House,"—and "The Flower of the Palace of Han," a romance adapted from the manuscript of Tchen-Yuen, a Chinese poet who flourished back in the thirteenth century.

An idea of the first of these pieces, which is certainly unusual—and happily so—may be gained from a very brief description and one or two quotations from the text. Its three characters are designated merely as "Voices" and the

heard the wail of a mourning woman. Then in dull, dead tones she addresses the soldiers:

"Thirty-three year ago he was my baby. I bore him. I warmed him, washed, dressed him; fended for him. I fed his little mouth with milk. Thirty-three year ago. And now he's dead!

"He had a strange way with him, my son; always had, from the day he first come. His eyes—they was wonderful.



They held folk. That and his tongue and his tender, pitiful heart.

"He wasn't particular, my son. He would go with anybody. He loved them so. There wasn't a drunken bibber in the place, not a lozel, not a thief, not a loose

woman on the streets, but called him brother—and now he's gone. I shall never know the touch and the healing gladness of him again, my son, my little lad!"

The lamentations of the mother continue until her words touch the captain's heart. At length he is persuaded that his view of duty has been wrong. Then, converted by the woman's words, he speaks the passage that contains the kernel of the play's philosophy.

"I am a soldier. I have been helping to build kingdoms for over twenty years. I

have never known any other trade.

Soldiery, bloodshed, murder: that's my business.

My hands are crimson with it. That's what empire means. The little children in the schools are drilled in obedience to it:

they are taught hymns in praise of it. Their parents encourage them in it: it never occurs to them to feel ashamed. That's what empire does to human beings in the city I come from.

"And so we go on building our kingdoms—the kingdoms of this world. We stretch out our hands, greedy, grasping, tyrannical, to possess the earth. Domination, power, glory, money, merchandise, luxury, these are the things we aim at: but what we really gain is pest and famine, grudge labor, the enslaved hate of men and women, ghosts, dead and death-breathing ghosts that haunt our lives forever. It can't last: it

never has lasted, this building in blood and fear. Already our kingdoms begin to totter. Possess the earth! We have lost it. We never did possess it. We have lost both earth and ourselves in trying to possess it: for the soul of the earth is man and the love of him, and we have made of both, a desolation.

"I tell you, woman, this dead son of yours, disfigured, shamed, spat upon, has built a kingdom this day that can never die. The living glory of him rules it. The meek, the terrible meek, the fierce, agonizing meek, are about to enter into their inheritance."

Now the dawn breaks and Calvary is revealed with its three Crosses which bear the limp figures of the Savior and the two thieves. The speakers, disclosed in the half-light, are discovered to be the *Virgin Mary*, the *Roman Centurion* and the *Soldier of The Legion*.

Thus does Mr. Charles Rann Kennedy appropriate the Scriptures as an avenue to playwriting royalties, by bringing the Crucifixion up to date and making it a symbol of a kind of advanced anarchism. The excessive banality of it, the monstrous impudence of it, can easily be surmised. One critic has observed that no other contemporaneous dramatist could have written the play. I am sure that no other playwright would have tried.

The philosophy of the piece crumbles at the first touch of analysis. It is not true, as Mr. Kennedy claims, that all the empires of the earth are built upon bloodshed and lust, that all good has departed from the material world, and that an ideal form of society is one in which each individual is free to act in accordance with his own sense of right, irrespective of the rights of others.

However, the play is performed reverently enough. The short glimpse of its single scene at the end discloses that it is imaginatively and beautifully produced. *The Virgin*, as embodied by Miss Edith Wynne Matthison, is a notable elocutionary effort. The other two characters are also adequately performed within the limitations set by the author.

It is a commentary on literary egotism that the printed text of "The Terrible Meek" has been sent to every crowned head in Europe.

"The Flower of the Palace of Han" is an interesting little exotic which, however, resists somewhat the attempt to turn it into modern poetry. In five scenes, three of which are exceedingly beautiful, is told the ancient Chinese legend of *Tchao-Kiun* and her sacrifice to save the throne of the Emperor *Yuen-Ti*. She is the most beautiful virgin in the realm and has been sent as a present to the ruler. A treacherous courtier has deceived him as to her beauty, so she is left waiting in the garden of the imperial palace until she is presently found by *Yuen-Ti*, who is lured to her side by the notes of her lute.

The treacherous courtier escapes to the camp of the besieging Tartars, who demand the girl as the price of peace. *Yuen-Ti*, now captivated by her charms, is loath to give her up, but she elects to make the sacrifice, promising eternal fealty to him. On the way to the barbarians' camp she jumps to her death in the River Amoor, and the Emperor, learning of her fate, vows before the tombs of his ancestors to rule henceforth with justice and mercy.

This Oriental literary antique lacks the dramatic elements we expect on the modern stage. Its translation, furthermore, is not closely in accord with its spirit; so much of its peculiar beauty is lost. But Miss Edith Wynne Matthison contrives to be very captivating as *Tchao-Kiun*, though Mr. Frank Reicher, as her liege lord, is neither imperial, Oriental nor ancient. Many others are in the cast but they are more picturesque than eloquent. Nevertheless the piece is worth doing, if only for its extreme oddity.

IT is amusing to imagine what must be the emotions of that innumerable and diligent band of Viennese librettists and composers when by chance they come across what remains of their wit and melody after their operettas have been put through the adapting mill of Mr. Harry B. Smith. The mystification of the Plymouth Rock hen who could not bring herself to recognize her potential offspring in the Spanish omelette must have been mild by comparison.

The new operetta, "The Rose Maid,"



A scene from "The Rose Maid;" Juliette Dilka (center) as the *Countess Bertrand*, and (left to right) Ethel Kelley, Anne Raymond, Sadie Mells, Grace Williams, Jane Rock and Louise Brunelle, as the Millionaires Chorus



Photograph by White, New York
Edith Decker as *Princess Hilda* in "The Rose Maid"

is an instance of the transforming processes which we have come to believe are necessary to make such foreign concoctions agreeable to our native senses of humor and romance. I do not know, of course, to what extent its score by Mr. Bruno Granichstaedten has escaped mutilation. Judging, however, from the consistency of its melodic style I believe it has been rather more fortunate in this respect than most of the other recent importations.

But no amount of perspicacity on the part of the original author of "*Bub Oder Maedel*" would detect even a remote resemblance of its present story to the libretto from which it is supposed to be taken. The formula of our present operatic books has come to be as rigid as the Mosaic Law. If a gradual decline of interest in light musical entertainments is taking place, the reason is that such shows are almost invariably cut after one conventional pattern.

"The Rose Maid," which is a companion piece to the very successful "*Spring Maid*" of a season ago, has an unusually coherent plot, however, and as it promises to be one of the most popular operettas of the summer season and continue its career into another year, I am going to indulge in the luxury of describing it. You are introduced when the curtain rises, into the London town house of the *Duke of Barchester*, a profligate young English nobleman who is living on the prestige of his title and his prospect of inheriting the estates of his uncle, *Sir John Portman*, a crusty old bachelor who does not approve his nephew's mode of life, especially as it is clear to him that the young fellow is being made the tool of a crew of designing sycophants, one of whom, the *Princess Hilda Von Lahn*, has promised to marry him, although she cares only for his position.

The *Duke*, who is hard up for ready money, is being financed by a trio of London loan sharks, and these, on account of the *Duke's* obligations to them, have secured invitations to a fancy-dress ball which he is giving that evening in honor of the *Princess*. Unluckily for the *Duke*, his sensible and provident uncle arrives in London on that same day. He sees the danger into which his nephew is plunging and decides to unmask the youth's false friends by pretending to have married secretly and become the father of a male heir who will succeed to the family fortune.

The deception is successful, for the *Princess* instantly casts aside the red rose of love which she has been wearing for the *Duke* and breaks her engagement. Consternation seizes the loan sharks, who, however, take a business view of the situation and form a matrimonial syndicate to marry off the *Duke* to an American heiress for the purpose of recouping their losses. They propose to send their titled creditor to Ostend, where he promises to pay court to *Gwendolen Bruce*, one of a party of rich American girls who are being chaperoned through Europe by the *Countess Bertrand*.

In the *Duke's* household, however, is the charming *Daphne*, the daughter of his housekeeper, whose father was once an officer in old *Sir John's* regiment. She is secretly in love with the young scapegrace, though she prefers in his honor the white rose of friendship rather than the red rose of love.

All repair presently to Ostend, where *Sir John* finds it necessary to borrow a baby in order to keep up his deception of paternity. By this time the *Duke* is deserted by his crowd of designing hangers-on and when the uncle sees him about to capitulate to the American girl for her money, and learns of the constancy of *Daphne*, he confesses that the story of the new heir is untrue and gives his sanction to the marriage of the *Duke* and *Daphne*.

The characters of course divulge their joys, sorrows and other emotions in song, which gives opportunity for the musical score of twenty numbers. Most of the melodies are sparkling and lilting, though they have not, perhaps, the magnetic quality of the music of "The Spring Maid." One waltz, "King of Bohemia," introduced apropos of nothing in particular, is quite delicious. Such other songs as "The Course of True Love," "Roses Bloom for Lovers," "Sweethearts, Wives and Good Fellows," "Money Talks" and "Lovely Moon" will surely win the popularity they deserve.

"The Rose Maid" is pretentiously costumed and staged. There are also singers of reasonable ability in its big company. Miss Adrienne Augarde, as *Daphne*, belongs to the *ingénue* rather than the prima donna class, but she is a winsome little heroine. Mr. J. H. Duffey as the *Duke*, Mr. R. E. Graham as the uncle, Miss Edith Decker as the inconstant sweetheart, Miss Dorothy Follis as the American heiress and Mr. Edward Gallagher, Mr. Albert Shean and Mr. Arthur Lacey as the three comic money lenders are some of the others.



Photograph by White, New York
Adrienne Augarde as *Daphne*, in "The Rose Maid"



Photograph by White, New York

Ida Adams as *Tony*, Elizabeth Brice as *Isabel*—

THE propensity of Broadway purveyors of light summer diversions, to adopt the names of Paris music halls to designate their temples of folly is beyond the understanding of traveled Americans, who know how immeasurably superior are our warm weather enter-

tainments to the corresponding shows of the French. For vulgarity, cheapness and crass stupidity commend me to the average Parisian summer *revue*!

So we have had successively the *Jardin de Paris*, *Olympia* and the *Folies Bergère*, and these are now followed by the



—Charles King as *Wilder Daly*, Charles J. Ross as *Rashleigh Gay*, and Harry Conor as *Welland Strong*, in "A Winsome Widow"

Moulin Rouge, which, however, in "The Winsome Widow" is presenting a livelier, prettier and better musical comedy than the Red Mill of Paris, even in its palmiest days, could boast. The fact that "The Winsome Widow" is "A Trip to Chinatown," that long distant success

of the famous old Hoyt days, in new musical dress, is not in any sense a reflection against its present interest.

To those who are already familiar with the escapades of *Welland Strong*, *Rashleigh Gay*, *Ben Gay*, *Willie Grow*, the *Widow* and the rest of the nightbirds



Photograph by Otto Sarony Co., New York
Emmy Wehlen as *Mrs. Guyer* in "A Winsome Widow"

at the Cliff House, San Francisco, the piece will be found to contain at least one novelty. As a climax for its fun the stage is suddenly transformed into an ice skating rink, and principals, chorus and all, on glistening steel runners, indulge in an ice carnival which gives an excuse for some very attractive fancy skating exhibits.

Most of the old ground work of "A

Trip to Chinatown" remains unchanged and its humor is as fresh as ever, due largely to the fact that Mr. Harry Conor is again in his amusing character of the hypochondriac, *Welland Strong*. The songs, though, are new, and these give opportunity to Miss Emmy Wehlen as the *Widow*. She is rather disappointing to those who remember Miss Anna Boyd twenty years ago in the same rôle.